



Yours Affly J. Hall

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THE

WORKS

OF

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

MINISTER OF BROADMEAD CHAPEL, BRISTOL, ENGLAND.

FIRST COMPLETE EDITION;

WITH

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.....VOL. I.

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

Be it remembered, that on the seventh day of October, A. D. 1830, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, G. & C. & H. Carvill of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, *to wit*: "The works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A. M. Minister of Broadmead Chapel, Bristol, England. First complete edition, with a brief memoir of the Author. In two volumes. In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

FREDERICK J. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New York.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS is the first complete edition of the writings of Robert Hall, ever published either in this country, or in England. It owes its origin to a wish on the part of the editor, to collect, for his own use, the scattered productions of an author, whom he had been accustomed to regard as one of the most attractive and energetic writers now living. When the plan of preparing such a collection for the press was seriously contemplated by him, it seemed as if an object so desirable must long since have been accomplished, had not some peculiar obstacles rendered it wholly impracticable. To ascertain what these obstacles were, he addressed several of the personal friends of Mr. Hall; who, in reply, expressed the unanimous opinion, that the proposed edition would form a valuable accession to our literature, and that no reasons could be urged against its immediate publication. This opinion was rendered more plausible by the fact, mentioned by one of these correspondents, that nothing posthumous can be expected from the pen of Mr. Hall, in consequence of his extreme aversion to the labor of writing.

In compliance with the suggestions of many, to whose judgement and taste it was proper to yield a respectful deference, and who pledged their cordial co-operation for its completion, the present edition was commenced. If it has not been completed to the entire satisfaction of all parties, it is a source of no inconsiderable gratification to the editor, that the numerous admirers of Mr. Hall, in our country, are now put in possession of so many of his productions, never before accessible on this side of the Atlantic. Few, probably, are apprised of the extreme difficulty with which these scattered publications have been collected; many of them being exceedingly rare, even in England.

Though nothing from the pen of Mr. Hall can be devoid of interest, yet several of his juvenile productions it has been deemed expedient to suppress. Apologies for republishing the interesting pamphlet, entitled, "Christianity consistent with a Love of Freedom," &c., which, it is said, Mr. Hall has proscribed, are stated in a note to the article itself. One word more concerning the appearance of this pamphlet in the present edition. One of the gentlemen whose kindness furnished the editor with many of the productions of Mr. Hall, was presented, when in England, with a copy of this celebrated but now very rare composition,

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being informed, at the same time, that the author had interdicted its republication. Under such circumstances, the individual alluded to would be incapable of any other part than that which he has uniformly sustained—refusing to become accessory to the publication of the article in question. The sole responsibility of its appearance, in the present form, rests upon the editor, who was supported by able advisers in the opinion, that the reasons which have led Mr. Hall to suppress this pamphlet in England, can have no reference to our country.

No system of arrangement could be devised entirely free from objections. That has been followed, which allowed the most equal distribution of matter into two volumes, having no reference to the order of time in which the several articles were originally written.

No apology is necessary for the brief memoir of Mr. Hall which accompanies the work, as there is, probably, no man living of equal eminence, with whose private history the public are so generally unacquainted. This biographical sketch is the same which was originally published in the *Imperial Magazine*, with some emendations, however, and many additions, such as the highly interesting letter from Sir James Mackintosh, extracts from the journals of foreign tourists, and remarks by able critics; so that the whole may be regarded as a compilation from very different sources of information.

Acknowledgements for aid in this undertaking are especially due from the editor to the Rev. Dr. Sprague, without whose co-operation, he is free to say, the task would not have been accomplished; to the late Rev. Mr. Bruen, Hon. Judge Story, Rev. Mr. Choules, Rev. Mr. Warne, and the Rev. Professor Elton, to whose politeness he is indebted for the loan of the elegant portrait of Mr. Hall, from which the engraving in this volume was copied.

Should the present edition lead to a more complete collection of the invaluable writings of Robert Hall, the object desired by all concerned in it will be attained,—that of promoting a more extensive circulation of the productions of one, who, in the words of the late Dr. Parr, “has, like Bishop Taylor, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint.”

Theol. Sem. Andover, }
Oct. 1830. }

W. ADAMS.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

THE subject of this memoir is the son of the Rev. Robert Hall, one of the most excellent and esteemed ministers of the communion, known by the name of Particular Baptists, to distinguish them, as the appellative imports, from another class denominated General Baptists. These distinctions, it is said, are peculiar to the English Baptists, and are founded on different views of the doctrines of grace.

The elder Mr. Hall was for many years pastor of a church at Arnsby, in the county of Leicester, and a leading man in the Northamptonshire Association ; being venerated by all who knew him for his piety and wisdom. He published a popular book, entitled, "Help to Zion's Travellers." The introductory preface to a late edition of this work, from the pen of his distinguished son, forms a part of the present compilation.

The subject of this biographical sketch was born at Arnsby, August, 1764. His father enjoyed the high satisfaction of witnessing, in the dawning mind of his son, indications of the most exalted genius. At the age of nine, as his father relates, he perfectly comprehended the reasoning in the profoundly argumentative treatises of Jonathan Edwards ; an author, it may be added, for whom Mr. Hall has continued to cherish the highest regard, and concerning whom he is represented by a respectable journalist as saying, 'He is the prince of American divines, and never had his superior in any country.' This high eulogium is of more value, as proceeding from one who was never guilty of cherishing a blind admiration of public characters, as he has fully proved by controverting the tenets of Dr. Edwards on the proper nature of virtue.

In 1773, he was placed in the academy of the late eccentric, but learned and pious Rev. Dr. John Ryland, of Northampton. From thence he was removed to the institution established at Bristol for

the education of young men destined to the ministry among the Particular Baptists. Dr. Caleb Evans, who at that time presided over the academy, and officiated as pastor of the congregation in Broadmead, was a man of extensive learning, fervent piety, captivating eloquence, and of the most liberal sentiments. Between the instructor and the pupil there immediately commenced a mutual attachment, which continued to increase, till it became evident that the latter was already marked as the intended successor of the principal, both in the church and the school.

At the age of seventeen, Mr. Hall proceeded to King's College, Aberdeen, where he formed an intimacy with his fellow-student, Mr. (now Sir James) Mackintosh, who, though one year younger than himself, and intended for the medical profession, was at this early period distinguished for his progress in classical and general literature. The most beautiful and eloquent letter from this renowned civilian to Mr. Hall, (for which the reader is referred to a subsequent page,) written in late years, and under peculiarly affecting circumstances, presents this early and continued intimacy, as well as the personal character of each party, in the most favorable aspect. During the residence of Mr. Hall at Aberdeen, a period of nearly four years, he constantly attended the lectures of the learned Dr. George Campbell, professor of theology and ecclesiastical history at the Marischal College. At intervals however, and especially in the vacations, he exercised his talents in preaching, as we learn from the following entry in the diary of his friend, Rev. Andrew Fuller, under date of May, 1784:—"Heard Mr. Robert Hall, junior, from this text: 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Felt very solemn on hearing some parts," &c.

About this time he took the degree of Master of Arts, soon after which he became colleague with Dr. Evans in the ministry, at Bristol, and adjunct instructor in the academy. At this place he was exceedingly followed and admired. The church where he officiated was crowded to excess, and among his admiring hearers were to be seen learned divines, and even dignitaries, of the Established Church. But in the midst of this popularity a dark cloud arose, which spread a gloom over the congregation, and threatened to deprive the Christian world of one of its brightest ornaments. It pleased Providence to visit Mr. Hall with a calamity, which (to adopt the language of his sympathizing friend) to a mind less fortified by reason and religion, all would dread to mention. Symptoms of a disordered intellect, which had occasionally appeared as the effect of that constitutional disease, which has rendered all his life one of extreme suffering, assumed at last such an alarming character, that it was deemed imprudent for the patient to take part in public duty. The malady increased, and Mr. Hall being now deemed irrecoverable, was taken home to his friends in Leicestershire. Under judicious treatment, and by slow degrees, however, the light of reason

returned, and at length his noble mind regained its perfect liberty and former power.

About this time Dr. Evans died ; but the trustees and congregation at Bristol had already made their election in favor of the younger Mr. Ryland, who continued with them till his death. Meanwhile Mr. Hall received a cordial invitation from the Baptist society at Cambridge, which had been under the pastoral care of Rev. Robert Robinson, till that singular man fell from one error to another, and ended his wanderings and his life together under the roof of Dr. Priestley, who, though he hailed his disciple with joy, wondered at being outdone by him in extravagance.

Mr. Hall accepted the call of the congregation at Cambridge in 1791, and the consequences were soon visible in the revival of a society which had been for some time in a sad state of torpidity. The fundamental truths of the gospel were stated in language equally clear and elegant ; the precepts of this heavenly code were enforced with commanding eloquence ; and the various obligations of men were set forth and explained in a manner that could not possibly be eluded or misunderstood.

When Mr. Hall fixed his residence here, the wonderful change that had taken place in France excited general attention, and even the religious world did not escape being agitated by the discordant spirit which that mighty revolution produced. The measures of Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley, in particular, alarmed the friends of government ; and the conduct of the latter had the effect of rousing the feelings of the populace at Birmingham into outrage, and acts of violence of the most disgraceful nature. At this juncture, Mr. C*****, a highly popular minister among the Calvinistic Independents in London, printed a sermon, recommending to Dissenters in general an entire forbearance from all political associations and discussions. Mr. Hall, conceiving that such counsel tended to the introduction of slavish principles, and the degradation of the religious society to which he belonged, deemed it his duty to enter a protest against the adoption of a rule that was at once repugnant to the fundamental rights of mankind, and in no respect warranted either by the written code, or the example of the founders of our common faith. With a view, therefore, to prevent the progress of the debasing maxims that had been speciously propounded, from one of the leading pulpits in the metropolis, Mr. Hall published a powerful pamphlet, entitled, "Christianity consistent with a Love of Freedom ;" to which, it is apprehended, no reply was ever attempted. The argumentative reasoning of this tract was afterwards expanded by the author, and arranged in a more formal manner, under the title of "An Apology for the Freedom of the Press." This publication, which appeared in the beginning of 1794, contains six sections on the following subjects : 1. The Right of Public Discussion ; 2. Associations ; 3. Reform of Parliament ; 4. Theories and Rights of Man ; 5. Dissenters ; 6. Causes of the Present Discontents. Of the Apology, it was observed at the time, by some of the

critics, to whom the principles of the work were most offensive, that "if a book must be praised at all events for being well written, this ought to be praised." Dugald Stewart expressed it as his opinion of this work, that it was the finest specimen of English composition then in existence. Mr. Hall apologizes for the warmth of its expressions, by pronouncing it an eulogy on a *dead friend*.

The next appearance of Mr. Hall before the world as an author, gave him still greater distinction, and procured him the esteem of many illustrious characters in church and state. The alarming extent of sceptical principles at the close of the century, and their pernicious effects upon public manners and private conduct, greatly affected the mind of this zealous preacher, and led him to investigate the evil in its causes and consequences. The result of his inquiry appeared in a sermon printed in 1800, with this title; "Modern Infidelity considered with respect to its Influence on Society." In this profound discourse the metaphysical sophistry of the new school of scepticism is exposed in all its native deformity, and the total inefficiency of it to the production of any moral good, either for the benefit of society, or the improvement of the individual, is demonstrably established.

Mr. Hall, when he published this masterly sermon, promised to enter into a fuller and more particular examination of the infidel philosophy, both with respect to its speculative principles and its practical effects; its influence on society and the individual. Unfortunately, this pledge, though made near thirty years ago, has not yet been redeemed, and the work which, of all others, would be the best antidote to scepticism, remains a desideratum.

On the 19th of October, 1803, being the day set apart by authority for a solemn fast, Mr. Hall was at Bristol, where he preached before a crowded congregation, consisting chiefly of volunteers. The period was gloomy, and the immense preparations then going on in France for an invasion of Britain, were enough to impress the most inconsiderate with serious thoughts and apprehensions. Such was the state of the country, when this matchless preacher, collected in himself, and full of holy confidence, endeavored to impart the same spirit to his hearers. Concerning the peroration of this grand discourse, it was remarked by a contemporary, and by no means partial critic, that it was the noblest specimen of eloquence in any language.

Not long after this, the exquisitely toned mind of Mr. Hall again sustained so violent a shock, that his removal from Cambridge was the unavoidable consequence. He was placed under the care of the late Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Leicester, by whose judicious treatment a complete recovery was effected. On this occasion, one so much calculated to inspire the friends of the patient with gratitude, and sympathy too, the following letter was written to Mr. Hall, by his early friend, Sir James Mackintosh, then absent from his country, in an official capacity.

BOMBAY, SEPT. 21, 1805.

My dear Hall,

I believe that in the hurry of leaving England, I did not answer the letter which you wrote to me in Dec. 1803. I did not, however, forget your interesting young friend, from whom I have received one letter from Constantinople, and to whom I have written at Cairo, where he now is. No request of yours, could indeed be esteemed lightly by me.

It happened to me a few days ago, in drawing up (merely for my own use) a short sketch of my life, that I had occasion to give a faithful statement of my recollection of the circumstances of my first acquaintance with you. On the most impartial survey of my early life, I could see nothing which tended so much to excite and invigorate my understanding, to direct it towards high, though, perhaps, scarcely accessible objects, as my intimacy with you. Five and twenty years are now past since we first met, but hardly any thing has occurred since, which has made a deeper or a more agreeable impression on my mind.

I now remember the extraordinary union of brilliant fancy with acute intellect, which would have excited more admiration than it has done, if it had been dedicated to the amusement of the great and learned, instead of being consecrated to the far more noble office of consoling, instructing, and comforting the poor and the forgotten. It was then too early for me to discover that extreme purity, which, in a mind pre-occupied with the low realities of life, would have been no natural companion of so much activity and ardor, but which thoroughly detached you from the world, and made you the inhabitant of regions where alone it is possible to be always active without impurity, and where the ardor of your sensibility had unbounded scope, amid the inexhaustible combinations of beauty and excellence.

It is not given us to preserve an exact medium. Nothing is so difficult as to decide how much ideal models ought to be combined with experience; how much of the future ought to be let into the present, in the progress of the human mind, to ennoble and purify us without raising us above the sphere of our usefulness; to qualify us for what we ought to seek, without unfitting us for that to which we must submit. These are great and difficult problems, which can be but imperfectly solved. It is certain that the child may be too manly, not only for his present enjoyment, but for his future progress.

Perhaps, my good friend, you have fallen into this error of superior nature; from this error has arisen, I think, the calamity with which it has pleased Providence to chasten you; which, to a mind less fortified by reason and religion, I should not dare to mention, and which I really consider in you as little more than the indignant struggle of a pure mind with the base realities which surround it, the fervent aspirations after regions more congenial to it, and a momentary blindness produced by the fixed contemplation of objects too bright for human vision. I may say in this case, in a far grander sense than that in which the words were originally spoken by the great poet,

"And yet the light which led astray
Was light from Heaven."

On your return to us, you must surely have found consolation in the only terrestrial produce which is pure and truly exquisite; in the affections and attachments you have inspired, which you were most worthy to inspire, and which no human pollution can rob of their heavenly nature.

If I were to prosecute the reflections and indulge the feelings which at this moment fill my mind, I should venture to doubt whether, from a calamity derived from such a source and attended with such consolation, I should yield so far to the vain opinions of men, as to seek to condole with you. But I check myself, and I exhort you, my most worthy friend, to check your own best propensities, for the sake of obtaining their object.

You cannot live for men without being with them. Serve God by the active service of men; contemplate more the good you can do, than the evil you can only lament; allow yourself to see the great loveliness of human virtue amidst all its imperfections; and employ your moral imagination, not so much in bringing it into contact with the model of ideal perfection, as in gently blending some of the fainter colors of the latter with its brighter lines of real,

experienced excellence. Thus heightening the beauty, instead of broadening the shade which must surround us, till we awake from this dream in other spheres of existence.

My habits of life have not been favorable to this train of meditation. I have been too busy and too trifling; my nature would have been, perhaps, better consulted, if I had been placed in a quiet situation, where speculation might have been my business, and visions of the fair and good my chief recreation. When I approach you, I feel a powerful attraction towards this, which seems the natural destiny of my mind; but habit opposes, obstacles and duty call me off, and reason frowns on him who wastes that reflection on a destiny independent of him, which he ought to reserve for actions of which he is the master.

In another letter I may write to you on miscellaneous subjects; at present I cannot bring myself to speak of them. Let me hear from you soon and often. Farewell, my dear friend.

Yours, most faithfully,

JAMES MACKINTOSH.

On recovering from this most calamitous visitation of Providence, Mr. Hall was entreated to undertake the pastorship of the Baptist Church at Leicester; and he accepted the invitation much to the advantage of that society, which had fallen into a very low state. The chapel would then contain about three hundred at the most; the members were poor, few in number, and the congregation scanty. In a short space of time, however, the building was found to be too contracted to accommodate the crowds that attended, and in consequence three successive enlargements took place; so that at present it is capable of seating eleven hundred persons.

Shortly after Mr. Hall's settlement at Leicester, he formed an intimacy with that excellent man, Mr. Robinson, vicar of St. Mary's. Though attached to different communions, yet similar in their views of the great truths of Christianity, equally liberal in their sentiments, and both possessing talents of a superior order, it is not to be wondered that the acquaintance should have ripened into an attachment entirely free from all jealousy and sectarianism.—The eulogium which Mr. Hall passed, at a public meeting in Leicester, upon his deceased friend, is not only a masterly piece of eloquence in itself, but a faithful portraiture of departed worth, and such as brings to mind the noblest panegyrics of Gregory Nazianzen.

The death of Mr. Robinson occurred in 1813, previous to which Mr. Hall published two admirable sermons, one entitled "The Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes, preached for the benefit of a Sunday School;" and the other an ordination sermon, with the title of "The Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister."

On the death of the Princess Charlotte, a sermon was preached by Mr. Hall, suited to the affecting circumstances, and at the desire of his congregation he sent the discourse to the press. The subject was one well adapted to the great powers of the distinguished author, and he did it ample justice in elegance and pathos. About the same time he reprinted his tract on the Freedom of the Press, with additions and corrections. This republication, however, involved him in a controversy with an unknown opponent, who attacked him, on the ground of his politics, in the *Christian Guardian*.

These animadversions being industriously copied into the Leicester Journal, compelled Mr. Hall to vindicate his principles and conduct. This defence called forth a reply, and a rejoinder followed, till the dispute grew warm, and the antagonist of Mr. Hall quitted the field.

Here Mr. Hall, for nearly twenty years, exercised his talents for the good of an affectionate people, to whom his ministry was blessed in an uncommon degree. But in 1825, the church at Broadmead, Bristol, which had enjoyed his earliest labors, having lost their pastor, the venerable Dr. Ryland, President of the college, invited him to become their pastor. The distress of the congregation, which had so long enjoyed the benefit of his instructions, in the apprehension of losing a preacher so eminent for his talents, so endeared by his virtues, was proportioned to the greatness of their expected loss. The struggle appears not to have been confined to one party, as several months elapsed before Mr. Hall was prepared to give an absolute decision. On the occasion of his accepting the invitation to Bristol, a respectful and affectionate tribute to his genius and goodness was presented by a body of Dissenting ministers, of different denominations, held at Arnsby, which evinces the high estimation in which he was held by all who knew him.

Here the narrative part of this memoir terminates; a few additional remarks are recorded, which may, perhaps, interest the admirers of our author.

The appearance of Mr. Hall is altogether extraordinary; such as would lead those who had never heard of him, to expect uncommon exhibitions of intellectual greatness. He is of about a medium height, has a bold and striking countenance, and an eye the most expressive and piercing.

Mr. Hall has been a sufferer from disease, during most of his life. The severe pain to which he has been subjected, must be his apology for appearing so seldom before the world as an author. Recent accounts speak of an increase of his malady, and a general state of declining health. It is sincerely hoped that these reports are unfounded, and that Mr. Hall will long remain the delight of his friends, the pride of literature, and the boast of Christianity.

Benevolence and humility are the prominent features in his character. In him, real courage for the cause of truth is blended with unaffected simplicity and modesty; of which it is often cited as a striking instance, that he declined to append the title of Doctor of Divinity to his name, though bestowed upon him some years since by the University of Aberdeen.

As a preacher, Mr. Hall stands almost unrivalled among his contemporaries, and yet it has been observed, that there is nothing very remarkable in his manner of delivery. He preaches without notes, esteeming writing a mere drudgery. If report is to be credited, his sermon on the death of Princess Charlotte was strictly speaking, an extemporaneous production; and, according to his own confession, his celebrated sermon on infidelity, which, perhaps, bears more evidence of

uniformity in execution, and elaborate finish, than any similar performance in our language, was never committed to writing, till it was imperiously demanded for the press ; while the eloquent fast sermon before volunteers was pronounced, when the author was engaged on an exchange of services with the Rev. Mr. Lowell, of Bristol, and was never written till he returned. In all his unwritten discourses there is the same length of sentences, the same graceful and flowing style, the same majesty of conception, by which his printed sermons are so strikingly characterized. In the pulpit he engages the attention by solemnity of deportment, rather than by assumed earnestness. His voice is feeble but distinct, and as he proceeds it trembles beneath his energies, and conveys the idea, that the spring of sublimity and beauty, in his mind, is exhaustless, and would pour forth a more copious stream, if it had a wider channel than can be supplied by the bodily organs.

His sermons are very perfect in plan. The author appears to see the end from the beginning in such things, and to believe as fully as the poet, that "Order is Heaven's first law." Divisions with him are few and simple, rarely marked numerically ; and this numbering of heads beforehand he has fully discountenanced by precept, as well as practice. He forms his schemes on what is called the topical method ; as on such subjects it is most natural that he should. In whatever pertains to writing, he is to be suspected of consulting Cicero more than he does the bishops. Though a theologian of the first order, he has nothing of their technicalities.

As to the nature of the proof which he brings to his subjects, we see him always full of philosophy and the nature of things, but he makes a free use of history, and a wise use of Scripture. The reviewer of one of his occasional discourses in a foreign journal, has the following remarks on one very excellent feature in the style of Mr. Hall.

The copious use of scriptural language, so eminently appropriate to theological writings, bestows upon the style of this writer an awful sanctity. The uncouthness and vulgarity of some religious authors, who are driven to employ the very words and phrases of Scripture, from an ignorance of other words and phrases, and an incapacity to conceive and express a revealed truth in any form but that of the authorized version of the Bible, has co-operated with an irreligious spirit to bring this important resource of theological eloquence into great disrepute. The skilful manner in which it is employed by Mr. Hall may restore its credit. Quotations and allusions, when borrowed from profane literature, are much admired. There is nothing, we think, to render them less admirable when borrowed from Holy Writ. If properly selected, they possess the same merit of appositeness in one case as in the other. They may be at least equal in rhetorical beauty ; and the character of holiness and mystery, which is peculiar to them, at once fills the imagination and warms the heart.

The mind of Mr. Hall has never been rigidly analyzed by the critics ; its organization is too perfect to invite such labor. But it may be safely affirmed that strength is its predominant quality, and that it is most decidedly of a philosophic cast. It seems at first to be formed in the same mould with those of the modern Scotch ; and one might be led naturally enough to inquire whether he was not

educated among them. Then again, on examining his writings a little further, he seems to betray that true English grace, no where else to be found except in a genuine Englishman, deeply learned at his own university. The fact, however, determines that this Englishman was indeed from Aberdeen; and it is hazarding nothing to affirm, that the great excellencies of the two nations are in him most happily united—the highest passion for philosophy with all the decorum of law—the speculations of learning with the majesty of common sense. Great Britain has furnished but one man besides, in whom this united character (to the same extent) is likely to be found—the late Dugald Stewart. To him, probably, Mr. Hall bears a greater literary likeness than to any other man of the present age.

The piety of Robert Hall will never be questioned. There appears in all his writings, a devout spirit, a constant and humble reliance on God. His zeal in defence of the truth is surely not less fervent than that of his brethren of any persuasion. Still, the mantle of his charity is as broad as the earth. Considering the circumstances of the man, such an entire freedom from bigotry is next to a miracle. It cannot be otherwise, than that the brethren of the same honorable communion with himself should be very dear to him, especially those noble and philanthropic compeers in his ministry, the Rylands, the Fullers, the Fosters; but to these he gives no undue preference. Though himself a Baptist and of Baptist descent, he has shown that he was never born for that sect nor for any other sect. He pronounces eulogies on the departed clergy of the Establishment, and in praise of their liturgy we see him an enthusiast. And in all this he is not ambitious of a return of their favor; for at the same time he cheers every Dissenter and bids him God speed; preaches himself at the ordination of Independents, and shields with his arm all that unprotected multitude, both from diocesan jealousies and from civil power. By every party he is equally esteemed; and it should not be matter of surprise to us, that he receives his full measure of applause from the Establishment. This is virtuous applause, founded on merit. It is no paradox to say of Mr. Hall, that he is the greatest Bishop in England—his diocese is limited only by Christendom. But it is that spirit of Christian harmony, which has gone forth, unmindful of every distinction but that of the friends and foes of the Redeemer's Kingdom, forming Union Associations, National Societies throughout Europe and America, which must testify of this man, at some future time. He seems to have been raised up for the special purpose of effecting the union of Christians in the promotion of a common cause, and the merging of minor differences in the cultivation of great principles, and the pursuit of great objects.

The springs of political government, too, have felt the touch of his unobtrusive but mighty hand. There is not, perhaps, a man now living, of whom the English politicians stand so much in awe, as of Robert Hall. He explains to them the British Constitution, points

them to the path of duty, arraigns them before the tribunal of the public, sifts all their proceedings, and dares even to speak against Mr. Pitt. All this however, as every act of this man, appears to be in the strictest subserviency to the cause of virtue and of heaven. But, alas! he is an old man, and verging to the grave. Who can refrain from exclaiming in the language of his learned friend, Dr. Olinthus Gregory—

“Oh! why will the most captivating, energetic, and profound preacher, and religious writer, now living, rest satisfied with giving to the world scarcely any but fugitive publications of temporary interest, the whole of which it is already difficult to collect, when all who know him, or are able to appreciate the value of his efforts, are anxiously anticipating the period when he will favor the public with some work of respectable magnitude and permanent interest, which shall enlighten and instruct its successive readers for ages to come.”

TERMS OF COMMUNION;

WITH A

PARTICULAR VIEW TO THE CASE

OF THE

BAPTISTS AND PÆDOBAPTISTS.

PREFACE.

THE love of controversy was in no degree the motive for writing the following sheets. Controversy the Writer considers as an evil, though often a necessary one. It is to be deprecated when it is directed to minute or frivolous objects, or when it is managed in such a manner as to call forth malevolent passions. He hopes the ensuing treatise will be found free from both these objections; and that as the subject must be allowed to be of some importance, so the spirit in which it is handled, is not chargeable with any material departure from the Christian temper. If the Author has expressed himself on some occasions with considerable confidence, he trusts the reader will impute it, not to a forgetfulness of his personal deficiencies, but to the cause he has undertaken to support. The divided state of the Christian world has long been the subject of painful reflection; and if his feeble efforts might be the means of uniting a small portion of it only in closer ties, he will feel himself amply rewarded.

The practice of incorporating private opinions and human inventions with the constitutions of a church, and with the terms of communion, has long appeared to him untenable in its principle, and pernicious in its effects. There is no position in the whole compass of theology, of the truth of which he feels a stronger persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation. To establish this position, is the principal object of the following work; and though it is more immediately occupied in the discussion of a case which respects the Baptists and the Pædobaptists, that case is attempted to be decided entirely upon the principle now mentioned, and it is no more than the application of it to a particular instance.

The Writer is persuaded, that a departure from this principle in the denomination to which he belongs, has been extremely injurious, not only to the credit and prosperity of that particular body, (which is a very subordinate consideration,) but to the general interests of truth; and that but for the obstruction arising from that quarter, the views they entertain of one of the sacraments would have obtained a more extensive prevalence. By keeping themselves in a state of separation and seclusion from other Christians, they have not only evinced an inattention to some of the most important injunctions of Scripture, but have raised up an invincible barrier to the propagation of their sentiments beyond the precincts of their own party.

It has been insinuated, that the Author has taken an unfair advantage of his opponents by choosing to bring forward this disquisition, just at the moment when we have to lament the loss of a person whose judgement would have disposed, and his abilities enabled him to do ample justice to the opposite side of the question. He can assure his readers, that none entertained a higher veneration for Mr. Fuller than himself, notwithstanding their difference of sentiment on this subject: and that when he entered on this discussion, it was with the fullest expectation of having his opposition to encounter. At that time, his state of health, though not good, was such as suggested a hope that the event was very distant which we all deplore. Having been led to mention this affecting circumstance, I cannot refrain from expressing in a few words, the sentiments of affectionate veneration with which I always regarded that excellent person while living, and cherish his memory now that he is no more; a man, whose sagacity enabled him to penetrate to the depths of every subject he explored; whose conceptions were so powerful and luminous, that what was recondite and original appeared familiar; what was intricate, easy and perspicuous, in his hands; equally successful in enforcing the practical, stating the theoretical, and discussing the polemical branches of theology: without the advantage of early education, he rose to high distinction among the religious writers of his day, and in the midst of a most active and laborious life, left monuments of his piety and genius which will survive to distant posterity. Were I making his eulogium, I should necessarily dwell on the spotless integrity of his private life, his fidelity in friendship, his neglect of self interest, his ardent attachment to truth, and especially the series of unceasing labors and exertions in superintending the mission to India, to which he most probably fell a victim. He had nothing feeble

or undecisive in his character ; but to every undertaking in which he engaged, he brought all the powers of his understanding, all the energies of his heart ; and if he were less distinguished by the comprehension, than the acumen and solidity of his thoughts ; less eminent for the gentler graces, than for stern integrity and native grandeur of mind, we have only to remember the necessary limitations of human excellence. While he endeared himself to his denomination by a long course of most useful labor, by his excellent works on the Socinian and Deistical controversies, as well as his devotion to the cause of missions, he laid the world under lasting obligations. Though he was known to profess different views from the Writer on the subject under present discussion, it may be inferred from a *decisive fact*, which it is not necessary to record, that his attachment to them was not very strong, nor his conviction probably very powerful. Be this as it may, his sanction of the practice of exclusive communion, has no doubt contributed in no small degree to recommend it to the denomination of which he was so distinguished an ornament. They who are the first to disclaim human authority in the affairs of religion, are not always least susceptible of its influence.

It is observable also, that bodies of men are very slow in changing their opinions, which with some inconveniences is productive of this advantage, that truth undergoes a severer investigation, and her conquests are the more permanent for being gradually acquired. On this account the Writer is not so sanguine as to expect his performance will occasion any sudden revolution in the sentiments and practice of the class of Christians more immediately concerned ; if along with other causes it ultimately contribute to so desirable an issue, he shall be satisfied.

It may not be improper to assign the reason for not noticing the treatise of the celebrated Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, on the same subject. It is not because he is insensible to the ingenuity and beauty of that performance, as well as of the other works of that original and extraordinary writer ; but because it rests on principles more lax and latitudinarian, than it is in his power conscientiously to adopt ; Mr. Robinson not having adverted, as far as he perceives, to the distinction of fundamentals, but constructed his plea for toleration,* in such a manner as to comprehend all the varieties of religious belief.

* The intelligent reader will understand me to refer, not to civil toleration by the state, but that which is exercised by religious societies.

The only author I have professed to answer, is the late venerable Booth, his treatise being generally considered by our opponents as the ablest defence of their hypothesis.

I have only to add, that I commit the following treatise to the candor of the public, and the blessing of God, hoping, that as it is designed not to excite, but to allay animosities; not to widen, but to heal the breaches among Christians, it will meet with the indulgence due to good intentions, however feebly executed.

ON TERMS OF COMMUNION.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WHOEVER forms his ideas of the Church of Christ from an attentive perusal of the New Testament, will perceive that *unity* is one of its essential characteristics ; and that though it be branched out into many distinct societies, it is still but one. "The Church," says Cyprian, "is one, which, by reason of its fecundity, is extended into a multitude, in the same manner as the rays of the sun, however numerous, constitute but one light ; and the branches of a tree, however many, are attached to one trunk, which is supported by its tenacious root ; and when various rivers flow from the same fountain, though number is diffused by the redundant supply of waters, unity is preserved in their origin." Nothing more abhorrent from the principles and maxims of the sacred oracles can be conceived, than the idea of a plurality of true churches, neither in actual communion with each other, nor in a capacity for such communion. Though this rending of the seamless garment of our Saviour, this schism in the members of his mystical body, is by far the greatest calamity which has befallen the Christian interest, and one of the most fatal effects of the great apostacy foretold by the sacred penman, we have been so long familiarized to it as to be scarcely sensible of its enormity, nor does it excite surprise or concern, in any degree proportioned to what would be felt by one who had contemplated the church in the first ages. To see Christian societies regarding each other with the jealousies of rival empires, each aiming to raise itself on the ruin of all others, making extravagant boasts of superior purity, generally in exact proportion to their departures from it, and scarcely deigning to acknowledge the possibility of obtaining salvation out of their pale, is the odious and disgusting spectacle which modern Christianity presents. The bond of charity, which unites the genuine followers of Christ in distinction from the world, is dissolved, and the very terms by which it was wont to be denoted, exclusively employed to express a pre-

dilection for a sect. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable ; it supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective ; it hardens the consciences of the irreligious, weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficacy of prayer, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit, which is essential to the renovation of the world.

It is easier however, it is confessed, to deplore the malady, than to prescribe the cure : for however important the preservation of harmony and peace, the interests of truth and holiness are still more so ; nor must we forget the order in which the graces of the Spirit are arranged. "The wisdom which is from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable." Peace should be anxiously sought, but always in subordination to purity, and therefore every attempt to reconcile the differences among Christians which involves the sacrifice of truth, or the least deliberate deviation from the revealed will of Christ, is spurious in its origin, and dangerous in its tendency. If communion with a Christian society cannot be had without a compliance with rites and usages which we deem idolatrous or superstitious, or without a surrender of that liberty in which we are commanded to stand fast, we must, as we value our allegiance, forego, however reluctantly, the advantages of such a union. Wherever purity and simplicity of worship are violated by the heterogeneous mixture of human inventions, we are not at liberty to comply with them for the sake of peace, because the first consideration in every act of worship is its correspondence with the revealed will of God, which will often justify us in declining the *external* communion of a church with which we cease not to cultivate a communion in spirit. It is one thing to decline a connexion with the members of a community *absolutely*, or simply because they belong to such a community, and another to join with them in practices which we deem superstitious and erroneous. In the latter instance, we cannot be said absolutely to refuse a connexion with the pious part of such societies ; we decline it merely because it is clogged with conditions which render it impracticable. It is impossible for a Protestant Dissenter, for example, without manifest inconsistency, to become a member of the Established Church ; but to admit the members of that community to participate at the Lord's table, without demanding a formal renunciation of their peculiar sentiments, includes nothing contradictory or repugnant. The cases are totally distinct, and the reasons which would apply forcibly against the former, would be irrelevant to the latter. In the first supposition, the Dissenter, by an active concurrence in what he professes to disapprove, ceases to dissent ; in the last, no principle is violated, no practice is altered, no innovation is introduced.

Hence arises a question, how far we are justified in repelling from our communion those, from whom we differ on matters confessedly not essential to salvation, when that communion is accompanied with no innovation in the rites of worship, merely on account of diversity of sentiment on other subjects. In other words, are we at liberty, or are we not, to walk with our Christian brethren *as far as we are agreed*, or must we renounce their fellowship on account of error allowed not to be fundamental, although nothing is proposed to be done, or omitted, in such acts of communion, which would not equally be done, or omitted, on the supposition of their absence? Such is the precise state of the question which it is my intention to discuss in these pages; and it may possibly contribute to its elucidation to observe, that the true idea of Christian communion is by no means confined to a joint participation of the Lord's supper. He who in the words of the Apostle's creed expresses his belief in the *communion* of *saints*, adverts to much more than is comprehended in one particular act. In an intelligent assent to that article, is comprehended the total of that sympathy and affection, with all its natural expressions and effects, by which the followers of Christ are united, in consequence of their union with their head, and their joint share in the common salvation. The kiss of charity in the apostolic age, the right hand of fellowship, a share in the oblations of the church, a commendatory epistle attesting the exemplary character of the bearer, uniting in social prayer, the employment of the term brother or sister to denote spiritual consanguinity, were all considered in the purest ages as tokens of *communion*; a term which is never applied in the New Testament exclusively to the Lord's supper. When it is used in connexion with that rite, it is employed, not to denote the fellowship of Christians, but the spiritual participation of the body and blood of Christ. (1 Cor. x. 16.)

When we engage a Christian brother to present supplications to God in our behalf, it cannot be doubted that we have fellowship with him, not less real or spiritual than at the Lord's table. From these considerations it is natural to infer, that no scruple ought to be entertained respecting the lawfulness of uniting to commemorate our Saviour's death, with those with whom we feel ourselves at liberty to join in every other branch of religious worship. Where no attempt is made to obscure its import, or impair its simplicity, by the introduction of human ceremonies, but it is proposed to be celebrated in the manner which we apprehend to be perfectly consonant to the mind of Christ, it would seem less reasonable to refuse to co-operate in this branch of religion than in any other, because it is appointed to be a memorial of the greatest instance of love that was ever exhibited, as well as the principal pledge of

Christian fraternity. It must appear surprising, that the rite which of all others is most adapted to cement mutual attachment, and which is in a great measure appointed for that purpose, should be fixed upon as the line of demarcation, the impassable barrier, to separate and disjoin the followers of Christ. He who admits his fellow Christian to share in every other spiritual privilege, while he prohibits his approach to the Lord's table, entertains a view of that institution, diametrically opposite to what has usually prevailed; he must consider it not so much in the light of a commemoration of his Saviour's death and passion, as a religious test, designed to ascertain and establish an agreement in points not fundamental. According to this notion of it, it is no longer a symbol of our common Christianity, it is the badge and criterion of a party, a mark of discrimination applied to distinguish the nicer shades of difference among Christians. How far either Scripture or reason can be adduced in support of such a view of the subject, it will be the business of the following pages to inquire.

In the mean while, it will be necessary, in order to render the argument perfectly intelligible, to premise a few words, respecting the particular controversy on which the ensuing observations are meant especially to bear. Few of my readers probably require to be informed, that there is a class of Christians pretty widely diffused through these realms, who deny the validity of infant-baptism, considering it as a human invention, not countenanced by the Scriptures, nor by the practice of the first and purest ages. Besides their denial of the right of infants to baptism, they also contend for the exclusive validity of immersion in that ordinance, in distinction from the sprinkling or pouring of water. In support of the former, they allege the total silence of Scripture respecting the baptism of infants, together with their incompetence to comprehend the truths, or sustain the engagements, which they conceive it designed to exhibit. For the latter, they urge the well-known import of the original word employed to express the baptismal rite, which they allege cannot, without the most unnatural violence, be understood to command any thing less than an *immersion* of the whole body. The class of Christians whose sentiments I am relating, are usually known by the appellation of *Baptists*; in contradistinction from whom, all other Christians may properly be denominated *Pedobaptists*. It is not my intention to enter into a defence of their peculiar tenets, though they have my unqualified approbation; but merely to state them for the information of my readers. It must be obvious that in the judgement of the Baptists, such as have only received the baptismal rite in their infancy must be deemed in reality *unbaptized*; for this is only a different mode of expressing their conviction of the invalidity of infant-sprinkling.

On this ground they have for the most part confined their communion to persons of their own persuasion, in which, illiberal as it may appear, they are supported by the general practice of the Christian world, which, whatever diversities of opinion may have prevailed, have generally concurred in insisting upon baptism as an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's table. The effect which has resulted in this particular case has indeed been singular, but it has arisen from a rigid adherence to a principle almost universally adopted, that baptism is, under all circumstances, a necessary prerequisite to the Lord's supper. The practice we are now specifying has usually been termed *strict communion*, while the opposite practice of admitting sincere Christians to the eucharist, though in our judgement not baptized, is styled *free communion*. Strict communion is the general practice of our churches, though the abettors of the opposite opinion are rapidly increasing both in numbers and in respectability. The humble hope of casting some additional light on a subject which appears to me of no trivial importance, is my only motive for composing this treatise, in which it will be necessary to attempt the establishment of principles sufficiently comprehensive to decide other questions in ecclesiastical polity, besides those which concern the present controversy. I am greatly mistaken if it be possible to bring it to a satisfactory issue, without adverting to topics in which the Christian world are not less interested than the Baptists. If the conclusions we shall endeavour to establish, appear on impartial inquiry to be well founded, it will follow that serious errors respecting terms of communion have prevailed to a wide extent in the Christian church. It will be my anxious endeavour, in the progress of this discussion, to avoid whatever is calculated to irritate; and instead of acting the part of a pleader, to advance no argument which has not been well weighed, and of whose validity I am not perfectly convinced. The inquiry will be pursued under two parts; in the first, I shall consider the arguments in favor of strict communion; in the second, state with all possible brevity the evidence by which we attempt to sustain the opposite practice.

PART I.

ARGUMENTS FOR STRICT COMMUNION CONSIDERED.

IN reviewing the arguments which are usually urged for the practice of *strict communion*, or the exclusion of unbaptized persons from the Lord's table, I shall chiefly confine myself to the examination of such as are adduced by the venerable Mr. Booth, in his treatise styled "An Apology for the Baptists," because he is not only held in the highest esteem by the whole denomination, but is allowed by his partizans to have exhibited the full force of their cause. He writes on the subject under discussion, with all his constitutional ardor and confidence, which, supported by the spotless integrity and elevated sanctity of the man, have contributed, more perhaps than any other cause, to fortify the Baptists in their prevailing practice. I trust the free strictures which it will be necessary to make on this performance, will not be deemed inconsistent with a sincere veneration for his character, which I should be sorry to see treated with the unsparing ridicule and banter, with which he has assailed Mr. Bunyan, a name equally dear to genius and to piety. The reader will not expect me to follow him in his declamatory excursions, or in those miscellaneous quotations, often irrelevant, which the extent of his reading has supplied: it will suffice if I carefully examine his arguments, without omitting a single consideration on which he could be supposed to lay a stress.

SECTION I.

The argument from the order of time in which Baptism and the Lord's supper are supposed to have been instituted.

One of the principal pleas in favor of *strict communion* is derived from the supposed *priority* of the institution of baptism to the Lord's supper. "That baptism was an ordinance of God," say our opponents, "that submission to it was required, that it was administered to multitudes before the sacred supper was heard of, are undeniable facts. There never was a time since the ministry of our Lord's successors, in which it was not the duty of repenting and believing sinners to be baptized. The venerable John, the twelve Apostles, and the *Son of God* incarnate, all united in commanding baptism, at a time when it would have been impious to have eaten bread, and drank wine, as an ordinance of

divine worship. Baptism, therefore, had the *priority* in point of institution, which is a presumptive evidence that it has, and ever will have, a prior claim to our obedience. So under the ancient economy, *sacrifices* and *circumcision* were appointed and practised in the patriarchal ages : in the time of Moses, the *paschal feast*, and *burning incense* in the holy place, were appointed by the God of Israel. But the two former being prior in point of institution, always had the priority in point of administration." (Booth's Apol. p. 41.)

As this is a leading argument, and will go far towards determining the point at issue, the reader will excuse the examination of it being extended to some length. It proceeds obviously entirely on a matter of fact, which it assumes as undeniable, the *priority in point of time* of the institution of Christian baptism, to that of the Lord's supper ; and this again rests on another assumption, which is the identity of John's baptism with that of our Lord. If it should clearly appear that these were two distinct institutes, the argument will be reversed, and it will be evident that the eucharist was appointed and celebrated before Christian baptism existed. Let me request the reader not to be startled at the paradoxical air of this assertion, but to lend an impartial attention to the following reasons.

1. The commission to baptize all nations, which was executed by the Apostles after our Saviour's resurrection, originated in his *express command* ; John's baptism, it is evident, had no such origin. John had baptized for some time before he knew him : it is certain then, that he did not receive his commission from him. "And I knew him not," saith he, "but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." If the manifesting Christ to Israel was the end and design of John's mission, he must have been in a previous state of obscurity ; not in a situation to act the part of a legislator by enacting laws or establishing rites. John uniformly ascribes his commission, not to Christ, but the Father, so that to assert his baptism to be a *Christian* institute, is not to interpret, but to contradict him. "And I knew him not," is his language, "but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." It was not till he had accredited his mission, by many miracles, and other demonstrations of a preternatural power and wisdom, that our Lord proceeded to modify religion by new institutions, of which the eucharist is the first example. But a Christian ordinance not founded on the authority of Christ, not the effect, but the means of his manifestation, and

which was first executed by one who knew him not, is to me an incomprehensible mystery.

2. The baptism of John was the baptism of *repentance*, or reformation, as a preparation for the approaching kingdom of God: the institute of Christ included an explicit profession of faith in a particular person, as the Lord of that kingdom. The ministry of John was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait." All he demanded of such as repaired to him, was to declare their conviction that the Messiah was shortly to appear, to repent of their sins, and resolve to frame their lives in a manner agreeable to such an expectation, without requiring a belief in any existing individual as the Messiah. They were merely to express their readiness to *believe on him who was to come*, (Acts 19: 4,) on the reasonable supposition that his actual appearance would not fail to be accompanied with attestations sufficient to establish his pretensions. The profession required in a candidate for *Christian* baptism, involved an *historical* faith, a belief in a certain individual, an illustrious personage, who had wrought miracles, declared himself the Son of God, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and rose again the third day. As the conviction demanded in the two cases was *totally distinct*, it was possible for him who sincerely avowed the one, to be destitute of the other; and though the rejection of Christ by John's converts would have been criminal and destructive of salvation, it would not have been self-contradictory, or absurd, since he might sincerely believe on his testimony that the Christ was shortly to appear, and make some preparations for his approach, who was not satisfied with his character, when he was actually manifested.

That such was the real situation of the great body of the Jewish people, at our Lord's advent, is evident from the evangelical records. In short, the profession demanded in the baptism of John was nothing more than a solemn recognition of that great article of the Jewish faith, the appearance of the Messiah, accompanied indeed with this additional circumstance, that it was nigh at hand. The faith required by the Apostles included a persuasion of all the miraculous facts which they attested, comprehending the preternatural conception, the Deity, incarnation and atonement, the miracles, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In the one was contained a general expectation of the speedy appearance of an illustrious person under the character of the Messiah; in the other, an explicit declaration that Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and death are recorded in the Evangelists, was the identical person. But in order to constitute an identity in religious rites, two things are requisite, a *sameness* in the corporeal action, and a sameness in the import. The *action* may be

the same, yet the rites totally different, or Christian baptism must be confounded with legal Jewish purifications, the greater part of which consisted in a total immersion of the body in water. The diversity of signification, the distinct uses to which they were applied, constitute their only difference, but quite sufficient to render it absurd to consider them as one and the same. And surely he is guilty of a similar mistake who, misled by the exact resemblance of the actions physically considered, confounds the rite intended to announce the future, though speedy appearance of the Messiah, without defining his person, and the ceremony expressive of a firm belief in an identical person, as already manifested under that illustrious character.

3. Christian baptism was invariably administered in the *name of Jesus*; while there is sufficient evidence that John's was not performed in that name. That it was not during the first stage of his ministry is certain, because we learn from his own declaration, that when he first executed his commission he did not know him, but was previously apprised of a miraculous sign, which should serve to identify him when he appeared. In order to obviate the suspicion of collusion or conspiracy, circumstances were so arranged, that John remained ignorant of the person of the Saviour, and possessed at the commencement of his career, that knowledge only of the Messiah, which was common to enlightened Jews. If we suppose him at a subsequent period to have incorporated the name of Jesus with his institute, an alteration so striking would unquestionably have been noticed by the Evangelists, as it must have occasioned among the people much speculation and surprise, of which, however, no traces are perceptible. Besides, it is impossible to peruse the gospels with attention, without remarking the extreme reserve maintained by our Lord, with respect to his claim to the character of Messiah; that he studiously avoided, until his arraignment before the High Priest, the public declaration of that fact; that he wrought his principal miracles in the obscure province of Galilee, often accompanied with strict injunctions of secrecy; and that the whole course of his ministry, till its concluding scene, was so conducted, as at once to afford sincere inquirers sufficient evidence of his mission, and to elude the malice of his enemies. In descending from the mount of transfiguration, where he had been proclaimed the Son of God from *the most excellent glory*, he strictly charged the disciples who accompanied him to tell no man of it, till he was raised from the dead. The appellation he constantly assumed was that of the Son of Man, which, whatever be its precise import, could by no construction become the ground of a criminal charge. When at the feast of dedication, "the Jews came around him in the temple, saying, how long dost

thou keep us in suspense? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly:" he replied, "I have told you, and ye believe not: the works which I do in my Father's name they bear witness of me." (John 10: 22, 30.) From this passage it is evident that our Lord had not hitherto publicly and explicitly affirmed himself to be the Messiah, or there would have been no foundation for the complaint of these Jews; nor does he on this occasion expressly affirm it, but refers them to the testimony of his works, without specifying the precise import of that attestation. In the progress of his discourse, however, he advances nearer to an open declaration of his Messiah-ship, than on any former occasion, affirming his Father and himself to be one, in consequence of which the people attempt to stone him, as guilty of blasphemy, in making himself the Son of God. As his time was not yet come, he still maintains a degree of his wonted caution, and vindicates his assumption of that honor, upon principles far inferior to what he might justly have urged. Yet such was the effect of this discourse, that in order to screen himself from the fury of his enemies, he found it necessary immediately to retire beyond Jordan. In an advanced stage of his ministry, we find him inquiring of his disciples the prevailing opinions entertained respecting himself; on which they reply, "Some say, thou art John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets." That he was the Messiah, was not, it is evident, the opinion generally entertained at that time, by such as were most favorably disposed towards his character and pretensions, which it could not fail to have been, had this title been publicly proclaimed; but this was so far from his intention, that when Peter, in the name of the rest of the Apostles, uttered that glorious confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" our Lord immediately enjoins secrecy. What he enjoined his disciples not to publish, he certainly did not publish himself, nor for the same reason suffer it to be indiscriminately proclaimed by his forerunner. But if we suppose John to baptize in his name, we must suppose what is equivalent to an explicit declaration of his being the Messiah; for since he on all occasions predicted the speedy appearance of that great personage, the people could not fail to identify with him, the individual whose name was thus employed, and all the precautions maintained by our Saviour would have been utterly defeated. For what possible purpose could he forbid his disciples to publish, what John is supposed to have promulgated as often as he administered the baptismal rite? And how shall we account, on this hypothesis, for the diversity of opinion which prevailed respecting his character, among those who were thoroughly convinced of the Divine mission of that great Prophet? From these considerations, in addition to the total si-

lence of Scripture, the judicious reader, I presume, will conclude without hesitation, that John did *not* baptize in the name of Jesus, which is an essential ingredient in Christian baptism ; and though it is administered, in fact, in the name of each person of the blessed Godhead, not in that of the Son only, this instead of impairing, strengthens the argument, by enlarging still farther the difference betwixt the two ordinances in question ; for none will contend that John immersed his disciples in the name of the Holy Trinity.

4. The baptism instituted by our Lord, is in Scripture distinguished from that of the forerunner, by the *superior effects* with which it was accompanied ; so that instead of being confounded, they are contrasted in the sacred historians. “I, indeed,” said John, “baptize you with water unto repentance, but there cometh one after me who is mightier than I ; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost, and in fire.” The rite administered by John was a mere immersion in water, unaccompanied with that effusion of the Spirit, that redundant supply of supernatural gifts and graces which distinguished the subjects of the Christian institute. On the passage just quoted, St. Chrysostom has the following comment : —“ Having agitated their minds with the fear of future judgement, and the expectation of punishment, and the mention of the axe, and the rejection of their ancestors, and the substitution of a new race, together with the double menace of excision and burning, and by all these means softened their obduracy, and disposed them to a desire of deliverance from these evils, he then introduces the mention of Christ, not in a simple manner, but with much elevation ; in exhibiting his own disparity, lest he should appear to be using the language of compliment, he commences by stating a comparison betwixt the benefit bestowed by each. For he did not immediately say, I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes, but having first stated the *insignificance* of his own baptism, and shewn that it had no effect beyond bringing them to repentance, (for he did not style it the water of remission, but of repentance,) he proceeds to the baptism ordained by Christ, which was replete with an *ineffable gift*.” (Homily XI. on Matthew.) This eminent Father, we perceive, insists on the prodigious inferiority of the ceremony performed by John to the Christian sacrament, from its being merely a symbol of repentance, without comprehending the remission of sins, (Mark 1: 4. Luke 3: 3.) or the donation of the Spirit. The Evangelists, Mark and Luke, it is true, affirm that John preached the baptism of repentance *for* the remission of sins, whence we are entitled to infer, that the rite which he administered, when accompanied with suitable dispositions, was important in the order of preparation, not that it was accompanied with the immediate or actual collation of that benefit.

Such as repented at his call, stood fair candidates for the blessings of the approaching dispensation, among which, an assurance of pardon, the adoption of children, and the gift of the Spirit, held the most conspicuous place; blessings of which it was the office of John to excite the expectation, but of Christ to bestow. The effusion of the Spirit, indeed, in the multifarious forms of His miraculous and sanctifying operation, may be considered as equivalent to them all; and this, we are distinctly told, was not given (save in a very scanty manner) during our Lord's abode upon earth, because He was not yet glorified. Reserved to adorn the triumph of the ascended Saviour, the Apostles were commanded to wait at Jerusalem until it was bestowed, which was on the day of Pentecost, when "a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind, filled the place where they were assembled, and cloven tongues of fire sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost." This was the first example of that baptism of the Spirit, as the author of which, John asserts the immense superiority of the Messiah, not to himself only, but to all preceding Prophets. In the subsequent history, we perceive that this gift was, on all ordinary occasions, conferred in connexion with baptism. In this connexion, it is exhibited by St. Peter in his address on the day of Pentecost; "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Thus it was also in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Agreeable to our Lord's prediction of the signs which should accompany them that believe, there is reason to suppose, a greater or less measure of these supernatural endowments, regularly accompanied the imposition of the hands of the Apostles on primitive converts, immediately subsequent to their baptism; which affords an easy solution to the surprise Paul appears to have felt, in finding certain disciples at Ephesus, who though they had been baptized, were yet unacquainted with these communications. "Into what then," he asks, "were ye baptized?" and upon being informed "into John's baptism," the difficulty vanished.

Since the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the copious effusion of spiritual influences, in which primitive Christians were, so to speak, immersed, was appointed to follow the sacramental use of water, under the Christian economy, while the same corporeal action performed by John was a naked ceremony, not accompanied by any such effects, this difference betwixt them is sufficient to account for their being *contrasted* in Scripture, and ought ever to have prevented their being confounded, as one and the same institute.

5. The case of the disciples at Ephesus, to which we have just adverted, affords a demonstrative proof of the position for which

we are contending ; for if John's baptism was the same with our Lord's, upon what principle could St. Paul proceed, in administering the latter to such as had already received the former ? As I am aware that some have attempted to deny so plain a fact, I shall beg leave to quote the whole passage, which, I am persuaded, will leave no doubt on the mind of an impartial reader. "It came to pass, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passing through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? but they replied, we have not even heard that there is an Holy Ghost. He said unto them, into what then were ye baptized ? they said, into John's baptism. Paul replied, John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him who was to come, that is on Jesus Christ. And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus ; and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." (Acts 19: 5.) I am conscious that there are not wanting some who contend, that the fifth verse ("When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,") is to be interpreted as the language of St. Paul, affirming that at the command of John, the people were baptized in the name of Jesus. But not to repeat what has already been advanced to shew that this is contrary to fact (for who, I might ask, were the people, who at his instigation were baptized in that name, or what traces are in the evangelical history of such a practice, during the period of his ministry ?) not to insist further on this, it is obvious that this interpretation of the passage contradicts itself : for if John told the people that they were to believe on him who *was* to come, this was equivalent to declaring that he had not yet manifested himself ; while the baptizing in his name as an existing individual, would have been to affirm the contrary. Besides we must remark, that the persons on whom St. Paul is asserted to have laid his hands, were unquestionably the identical persons who are affirmed in the preceding verse to have been baptized : for there is no other antecedent, so that if the meaning of the passage be what some contend for, the sacred historian must be supposed to assert that he laid his hands, not on the twelve disciples at Ephesus, but on John's converts in general, that the Holy Ghost came upon them, and that they spake with tongues and prophesied, which is ineffably absurd.

Either this must be supposed, or the words which in their original structure are most closely combined, must be conceived to consist of two parts, the first relating to John's converts in general, the second to the twelve disciples at Ephesus ; and the rela-

tive pronoun expressive of the latter description of persons, instead of being conjoined to the preceding clause, must be referred to an antecedent, removed at the distance of three verses. In the whole compass of theological controversy, it would be difficult to assign a stronger instance of the force of prejudice in obscuring a plain matter of fact; nor is it easy to conjecture what could be the temptation to do such violence to the language of Scripture, and to every principle of sober criticism, unless it were the horror which certain divines have conceived, against every thing which bore the shadow of countenancing anabaptistical error. The ancient commentators appear to have felt no such apprehensions, but to have followed without scruple the natural import of the passage.*

6. Independently of this decisive fact, whoever considers the extreme popularity of John, and the multitude of all descriptions who flocked to his baptism, will find it difficult to believe, that there were not many in the same situation with these twelve dis-

* The intelligent reader will not be displeased to see the opinion of St. Austin on this point. It is almost unnecessary to say that it is decisively in our favor; nor does it appear that any of the Fathers entertained a doubt on the subject. In consulting the opinion of those who contended that such as were reclaimed from heresy ought to be rebaptized, he represents them as arguing, that if the converts of John required to be rebaptized, much more those who were converted from heresy. Since they who had the baptism of John were commanded by Paul to be baptized, not having the baptism of Christ, why do you extol the merit of John, and reprobate the misery of heretics. "I concede to you," says St. Austin, "the misery of heretics: but heretics give the baptism of Christ, which John did not give."

The comment of Chrysostom, on the passage under consideration, is equally decisive. "He (Paul) did not say to them that the baptism of John was nothing, but that it was incomplete; nor does he say this simply, or without having a further purpose in view, but that he might teach and persuade them to be baptized in the name of Jesus, which they were, and received the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of Paul's hands." In the course of his exposition, he solves the difficulty attending the supposition of disciples at Ephesus, a place so remote from Judæa, having received baptism from John. "Perhaps," says he, "they were then on a journey, and went out, and were baptized." But even when they were baptized, they knew not Jesus. Nor does he ask them, do ye believe on Jesus, but have ye received the Holy Ghost? He knew that they had not received it, but is desirous of speaking to them, that on learning that they were destitute of it, they might be induced to seek it. A little afterwards he adds, "Well did he (Paul) denominate the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance, and not of remission; instructing and persuading them that it was destitute of that advantage: but the effect of that which was given afterwards was remission."—*Homily in loco, Vol. 4. Etone.*—I am aware that very learned men have doubted the authenticity of Chrysostom's Commentary on the Acts, on account of the supposed inferiority of it to his other expository works. But without having recourse to so violent a supposition, its inferiority, should it be admitted, may be easily accounted for by the negligence, ignorance, or inattention of his amanuensis; supposing (which is not improbable) that his discourses were taken from his lips. From the time he was sixty years of age, he permitted his discourses to be taken down in short-hand, just as he delivered them.—*Euseb. Lib. 6, c. 26.*

ciples. The annunciation of the speedy appearance of their Messiah was the most welcome of all intelligence to the Jewish people, and did not fail for a time to produce prodigious effects.

The reader is requested to notice the terms employed to describe the effects of John's ministry, and compare them with the language of the historian, in depicting the most prosperous state of the church. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the coast round about Jordan, and were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins." Where is such language employed to represent the success of the Apostles? *Their* converts are *numerically* stated, and at some distance from our Lord's ascension, appear to have amounted to about five thousand, while a great majority of the nation continued impenitent and incredulous. We read of no party formed against the son of Zechariah, no persecution raised against his followers; and such was the reverence in which he continued to be held after his death, that the Scribes and Pharisees, those determined enemies to the gospel, dared not avow their disbelief of his mission, because all the people considered him as a Prophet. The historian Josephus, who is generally supposed by the learned to have made no mention of our Saviour, bears decisive testimony to his merits, and imputes the misfortunes of Herod to the guilt he contracted by putting him to death. *Antiq. Jud. Lib. 8. Colon. 1691.*

From these considerations, I infer, that if we suppose the converts made by the Apostles to have been universally baptized, on their admission into the church, (a fact not doubted by our opponents,) multitudes of them must have been in the same situation with the disciples at Ephesus. How is it possible it should have been otherwise? When the number of his converts were so prodigious, when the submission to his institute appears to have been almost national, when of so small a number as twelve, two at least of the Apostles were of his disciples, who can doubt for a moment, that some at least of the multitudes who were converted on or after the day of Pentecost, consisted of such as had previously submitted to the baptism of John? Is it possible that the ministry of the forerunner, and of the Apostles of our Lord, should both have been productive of such great effects among the same people, at the distance of a few years, without operating in a single instance in the same direction, and upon the same persons? Amongst the converts at the day of Pentecost, and at subsequent periods, there must have been no inconsiderable number who had for a time been sufficiently awakened by the ministry of John to comply with this ordinance; yet it is evident from the narrative in the Acts, as well as admitted by our opponents, that Peter enjoined on them all, without exception, the duty of being immersed in the name of

Christ. That such a description of persons should need to be converted by the Apostles, will easily be conceived, if we allow ourselves to reflect on the circumstances of the times. "He was a burning and a shining light," said our Lord, speaking of his forerunner, "and ye were willing for a time to rejoice in his light." This implies that their attachment was transient, their repentance superficial, and that the greater part of such as appeared for awhile most determined to press into the kingdom of God, afterwards sunk into a state of apathy. The singular spectacle of a Prophet arising, after a long cessation of prophetic gifts, his severe sanctity, his bold and alarming address, coinciding with the general expectation of the Messiah, made a powerful impression on the spirits of men, and disposed them to pay a profound attention to his ministry; and from their attachment to every thing ritual and ceremonial, they would feel no hesitation in submitting to the ceremony he enjoined. But when the kingdom which they eagerly anticipated, appeared to be altogether of a spiritual nature, divested of secular pomp and grandeur, when the sublimer mysteries of the gospel began to be unfolded, and the necessity inculcated of eating the flesh, and drinking the blood, of the Son of Man, the people were offended, and even of the professed disciples of our Lord, many walked no more with him. A general declension succeeded, so that of the multitudes who once appeared to be much moved by his ministry, and that of his forerunner, the number which persevered was so inconsiderable, that all that could be mustered to witness his resurrection amounted to little more than five hundred, (1 Cor. 15: 6.) a number which may be considered as constituting the whole body of the church, till the day of Pentecost.

The parable of the house forsaken for a time by an evil spirit, swept and garnished, to which he returned with seven more wicked than himself, it is generally admitted, was designed to represent this temporary reformation of the Jewish nation, together with its subsequent apostacy. The day of Pentecost changed the scene, the power of the ascended Saviour began to be developed; and three thousand were converted at one time. Nor did it cease here; for soon after, we are informed of a great multitude of priests who became obedient to the faith; and at a subsequent period St. James reminds the Apostle of the Gentiles of many myriads of converted Jews, all zealous for the law.

Let me ask again, is it possible to suppose that none of these myriads consisted of such as had been baptized by John? Were they all, without exception, of that impious class which uniformly held his mission in contempt? It is impossible to suppose it; it is contradicted by the express testimony of Scripture, which af-

firms two of the Apostles to have been his disciples and companions. (John 1: 35, 36, 37.) But if such as professed their faith in Christ, under the ministry of the Apostles, were baptized on that profession, without any consideration of their having been previously immersed by John, or not, what stronger proof can be desired, that the institutes in question were totally distinct. Were we satisfied with an *argumentum ad hominem*, with the sort of proof sufficient to silence our opponents, here the matter might safely rest. But independent of their concession, I must add, that it is manifest from the whole tenor of the Acts, that the baptismal rite was universally administered to the converts to Christianity subsequent to the day of Pentecost. Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized *every one* of you:" it is added almost immediately, "Then they that gladly received his words were baptized."

It will possibly be asked, if the rite which the forerunner of our Lord administered is not to be considered as a Christian institute, to what dispensation are we to assign it, since it is manifestly no part of the economy of Moses. We reply, that it was the symbol of a peculiar dispensation, which was neither entirely legal or evangelical, but occupied an intermediate station, possessing something of the character and attributes of both; a kind of twilight, equally removed from the obscurity of the first, and the splendor of the last and perfect economy of religion. *The law and the prophets were till John*; his mission constituted a distinct era, and placed the nation to which he was sent, in circumstances materially different from their preceding or subsequent state. It was the era of preparation; it was a voice which, breaking through a long silence, announced the immediate approach of the *desire of all nations, the messenger of the covenant, in whom they delighted*. In announcing this event as at hand, and establishing a rite unknown to the law, expressive of that purity of heart, and reformation of life, which were the only suitable preparations for his reception, he stood alone, equally severed from the choir of the Prophets, and the company of the Apostles; and the light which he emitted, though it greatly surpassed every preceding illumination, was of short duration, being soon eclipsed and extinguished by that ineffable effulgence, before which nothing can retain its splendor.

The wisdom of God in the arrangement of successive dispensations, seems averse to sudden and violent innovations, rarely introducing new rites, without incorporating something of the old. As by the introduction of the Mosaic, the simple ritual of the patriarchal dispensation was not so properly abolished, as amplified and extended into a regular system of prefigurations of *good things*

to come, in which the worship by sacrifices, and the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, re-appeared under a new form ; so the era of immediate preparation was distinguished by a ceremony not entirely new, but derived from the purifications of the law, applied to a special purpose.* Our Lord incorporated the same rite into his religion, newly modified, and adapted to the peculiar views and objects of the Christian economy, in conjunction with another positive institution, the rudiments of which are perceptible in the passover. It seemed suitable to his wisdom, by such gentle gradations to conduct his church from an infantine state, to a state of maturity and perfection.

Before I dismiss this part of the subject, which has perhaps already detained the reader too long, I must beg leave to hazard one conjecture. Since it is manifest that the baptism of John did not supersede the Christian ordinance, they being perfectly distinct, it is natural to inquire, who baptized the Apostles, and the hundred and twenty disciples assembled with them at the day of Pentecost? My deliberate opinion is, that in the Christian sense of the term, they were not baptized at all. From the total silence of Scripture, and from other circumstances which might be adduced, it is difficult to suppose they submitted to that rite after our Saviour's resurrection ; and previous to it, it has been sufficiently proved, that it was not in force. It is almost certain, that some, probably most of them, had been baptized by John, but for reasons which have been already amply assigned, this will not account for their not submitting to the Christian ordinance. The true account seems to be, that the precept of baptism had no *retrospective* bearing ; and that, consequently, its obligation extended only to such as were converted to Christianity subsequently to the time of its promulgation. Such as had professed their faith in Christ from the period of his first manifestation, could not, without palpable incongruity, recommence that profession, which would have been to cancel and annul their former religious pretensions. With what propriety could the Apostles of the Lord, *who had continued with him in his temptations*, place themselves on a level with that multitude, which however penitent at present, had recently demanded his blood with clamorous importunity ? not to insist that they had already received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which the sacramental use of water was but a figure. They were not converted to the Christian religion subsequently to their Lord's resurrection, nor did the avowal of their attachment to the Messiah, commence from that period, and therefore, they were not comprehended under the baptismal law, which was propounded for the regulation of the conduct of persons in essentially different circumstances. When St. Paul says, *as many of us as*

* The principal part of these consisted in bathing the body in water.

were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, his language seems to intimate, that there was a class of Christians, to whom this argument did not apply. (Rom. 6: 3.)

Having proved, I trust, to the satisfaction of the candid reader, that baptism, considered as a Christian institution, had no existence during the personal ministry of our Saviour,* the plea of our opponents, founded on the supposed *priority* of that ordinance to the Lord's supper, is completely overruled; whatever weight it might possess, supposing it were valid, must be wholly transferred to the opposite side, and it must be acknowledged, either that they have reasoned inconclusively, or have produced a demonstration in our favor. It now appears that the original communicants at the Lord's table, at the time they partook of it, were with respect to the Christian baptism, precisely in the same situation with the persons they exclude.

SECTION II.

The argument for strict communion, from the order of words in the apostolic commission considered.

The commission which the Apostles received after our Lord's resurrection, was in the following words:—"All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." From baptism being mentioned *first* after teaching, it is urged that it ought invariably to be administered immediately after effectual instruction is imparted, and consequently before an approach to the Lord's table. Whence it is concluded that to communicate with such as are unbaptized, is a violation of divine order.†

* Mr. Hall answers the objection which may be brought against this hypothesis from the fact that the disciples of Christ baptized during his ministry, (John 4: 1) in the postscript at the end of this treatise.—Ed.

† "Teach," says Mr. Booth, "is the high commission, and such the express command of him who is *Lord of all*, when addressing those who are called to preach his word, and administer his institutions. Hence, it is manifest, the commission and command are first of all to teach; what then?—to baptize? or to administer the Lord's supper? I leave common sense to judge, and being persuaded that she will give her verdict in my favor, I will venture to add, a limited commission implies a prohibition of such things as are not contained in it; and positive laws imply their *negative*."

For instance, when God commanded Abraham to circumcise all his males, he readily concluded that neither circumcision, nor any rite of a similar nature, was to be administered to his females. And as our brethren themselves maintain, when Christ commanded *believers* should be baptized, without mentioning any others, he tacitly prohibited that ordinance from being administered to *in-*

It may assist the reader to form a judgement of the force of the argument adduced on this occasion, if we reduce it to the following syllogism :

The persons who are to be taught to observe all things given in charge to the Apostle, are the baptized alone.

But the Lord's supper is one of these things.

Therefore, the ordinance of the Lord's supper, ought to be enjoined on the baptized alone.

Here it is obvious, that the conclusion rests entirely upon this principle, that *nothing* which the Apostles were commissioned to enjoin on believers, is to be recommended to the attention of persons not baptized ; since, as far as this argument is concerned, the observation of the Lord's supper is supposed not to belong to them, merely because it forms a part of those precepts. It is obvious, if the reasoning of our opponents be valid, it militates irresistibly against the inculcation of every branch of Christian duty, on persons who in their judgement have not partaken of the baptismal sacrament : it excludes them not merely from the Lord's supper, but from every species of instruction appropriate to Christians ; nor can they exhort Pædobaptists to walk worthy of their high calling, to adorn their Christian profession, to cultivate brotherly love, or to the performance of any duty resulting from their actual relation to Christ, without a palpable violation of their own principles. In all such instances, they would be teaching them to observe injunctions which Christ gave in charge to the Apostles for the regulation of Christian conduct, while they deem it necessary to repel them from the sacrament, merely on account of its forming a part of those injunctions. Nor can they avoid the force of this reasoning, by objecting that though it may be their duty to enjoin on unbaptized believers some parts of the mind of Christ respecting the conduct of his mystical members, it will not follow that they are to be admitted to the Lord's table ; and that their meaning is, that it is only subsequently to baptism, that *all things* ought to be enforced on the consciences of Christians. For if it be once admitted that the clause on which so much stress is laid, is not to be interpreted so as absolutely to exclude unbaptized Christians from the *whole* of its import, to what purpose is it alleged against their admission to the eucharist ? or how does it appear that this may not be one of the parts in which they are comprehended ?

fants ; so by parity of reason, if the same sovereign Lord commanded that believers should be baptized—baptized *immediately* after they made a profession of faith, then he must intend that the administration of baptism should be prior to a reception of the Lord's supper, and, consequently, tacitly prohibits every unbaptized person having communion at his table."—*Booth's Apol.* p. 34.

When the advocates for strict communion remind us of the order in which the two positive institutions of Christianity are enjoined, they appear to assume it for granted, that we are desirous of inverting that order, and that we are contending for the celebration of the eucharist previous to baptism, in the case of a clear comprehension of the nature and obligation of each. We plead for nothing of the kind. Supposing a convert to Christianity, convinced of the ordinance of baptism, in the light in which we contemplate it, we should urge his obligation to comply with it, previous to his reception of the sacrament, with as little hesitation as the most rigid of our opponents; nor should we be more disposed than themselves to countenance a neglect of known duty, or a wanton inversion of the order of Christian appointments. Whether in such circumstances the attention of a candidate for Christian communion should first be directed to baptism, is not the question at issue; but what conduct ought to be maintained towards sincere Christians, who, after serious examination, profess their conviction of being baptized already, or who in any manner whatever, are withheld by motives purely conscientious, from complying with what we conceive to be a Christian ordinance. To justify the exclusion of such from the Lord's table, it is not sufficient to allege the prescribed order of the institutions; it is necessary also to evince such a *dependance* of one upon the other, that a neglect of the first from involuntary mistake, annuls the obligation of the second. Let this dependance be once clearly pointed out, and we give up the cause. It has been asserted, indeed, with much confidence, that we have the same authority for confining our communion to baptized persons, as the ancient Jews for admitting none but such as had been circumcised, to the passover: a simple recital, however, of the words of the law, with respect to that ancient rite, will be sufficient to demonstrate the contrary: "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep his passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no *uncircumcised* person shall eat thereof." But where, let me ask, is it asserted in the New Testament, that no unbaptized person shall partake of the eucharist? So far from this, it has been, I trust, satisfactorily shewn, that of the original communicants at its first institution, not one was thus qualified.

* "Was it the duty, think you, of an ancient Israelite to worship at the sanctuary, or to partake of the paschal feast, before he was circumcised? Or was it the duty of the Jewish priests to burn incense in the Holy Place, before they offered the morning or evening service? The appointments of God must be administered in his own way, and in that order which he has fixed."—*Booth's Apol.* p. 143.

I presume it will be acknowledged, that the Jewish law was so clear and express in insisting on circumcision as a necessary preparation for partaking of the paschal lamb that none could mistake it, or approach that feast in an uncircumcised state, without being guilty of wilful impiety ; and if it is intended to insinuate the same charge against Pædobaptists, let it be alleged without disguise, that it may be fairly met and refuted. But if it be acknowledged, that nothing but such involuntary mistakes, such unintentional errors, as are incident to some of the wisest and best of men, are imputable in the present instance, we are at a loss to conceive upon what principle they are compared to wilful prevarication and rebellion. The degree of blame which attaches to the conduct of those who mistake the will of Christ with respect to the sacramental use of water, we shall not pretend to determine ; but we feel no hesitation in affirming, that the practice of comparing it to a presumptuous violation and contempt of divine law, is equally repugnant to the dictates of propriety and of candor. Among the innumerable descendants of Abraham, it is impossible to find one since their departure from Egypt, who has doubted of the obligation of circumcision, of the proper subjects of that rite, or of its being an indispensable prerequisite to the privileges of the Mosaic covenant. Among Christians, on the contrary, of unexceptionable character and exalted piety, it cannot be denied that the subject, the mode, and the perpetuity of baptism, have each supplied occasion for controversy ; which can only be ascribed to the minute particularity with which the ceremonies of the law were enjoined, compared to the concise brevity which characterizes the history of evangelical institutes. We are far, however, from insinuating a doubt on the obligation of believers to submit to the ordinance of baptism, or of its being exclusively appropriated to such ; but we affirm, that in no part of scripture is it inculcated as a *preparative to the Lord's supper*, and that this view of it is a mere fiction of the imagination.

When duties are enjoined in a certain series, each of them, on the authority in which they originate, become obligatory ; nor are we excused from performing those which stand later in the series, on account of our having, from misconception of their meaning, or from any other cause, omitted the first. To exemplify this by a familiar instance : it will be admitted, that the law of nature enforces the following duties, resulting from the relation of children to their parents : first, to yield implicit obedience in the state of nonage ; next, in maturer age to pay respectful deference to their advice, and a prompt attention to their wants ; lastly, after they are deceased, affectionately to cherish their memory, and defend their good name. None will deny that each of these branches of con-

duct is obligatory, and that this is the order in which they are recommended to our attention. But will it be contended, that he who has neglected the first, ought not to perform the second ; or, that he who has failed in the second, ought to omit the third ? To such an absurd pretence we should immediately reply that they are all *independently* obligatory, as respective dictates of the divine will ; and that for him who has violated one of them, to urge his past delinquencies as an apology for the present, would only prove an aggravation of his guilt. It is true, that some duties are so situated, as parts or appendages of preceding ones, that their obligation may be said to result from them ; as for example, the duty of confessing Christ before men arises from the previous duty of believing on him, and that of joining a Christian society presupposes the obligation of becoming a Christian. In such cases, however, as the connexion betwixt the respective branches of practice is founded on the nature of things, it is easily perceived, and rarely, if ever, the subject of controversy. In a series of positive precepts, this principle has no place ; as they originate merely in arbitrary appointment, their mutual relation can only be the result of clear and express command, and as reason could never have discovered their obligation, so it is as little able to ascertain their intrinsic connexion and dependance, which, wherever it subsists, must be the effect of the same positive prescription which gave them birth. It cannot be pretended, that an unbaptized believer is intrinsically disqualified for a suitable attendance at the Lord's table, or that it is so essentially connected with baptism, as to render the act of communion, in itself, absurd or improper. The communion has no retrospective reference to baptism, nor is baptism an anticipation of communion. Enjoined at different times, and appointed for different purposes, they are capable, without the least inconvenience, of being contemplated apart ; and on no occasion are they mentioned in such a connexion, as to imply, much less to assert, that the one is enjoined *with a view* to the other. Such a connexion, we acknowledge, subsisted between the rites of circumcision and the passover ; and all we demand of the advocates of strict communion is, that instead of amusing us with fanciful analogies drawn from an antiquated law, they would point us to some clause in the New Testament, which asserts a similar relation betwixt baptism and the Lord's supper. But here, where the very hinge of the controversy turns, the Scriptures are silent. They direct us to be baptized, and they direct us to commemorate the Saviour's death, but not a syllable do they utter to inform us of the inseparable connexion betwixt these two ordinances. This deficiency is ill supplied by fervid declamation on the perspicuity of our Lord's commission, and the inexcusable inattention or pre-

judice which has led to a misconception of its meaning ; for let the persons whom these charges may concern be as guilty as they may, since they are still acknowledged to be Christians, the question returns, why are they debarred from the communion of saints, and while entitled to all other spiritual privileges, supposed to be incapacitated from partaking of the symbols of a crucified Saviour. How came the deteriorating effects of their error respecting baptism, to affect them but in one point, that of their eligibility as candidates for communion, without spreading farther? That it just amounts to a forfeiture of this privilege, and of no other, is a conclusion to which, as it is certain it cannot be established by reason, we ask to be conducted by revelation ; and we intreat our opponents for information on that head again and again, but intreat in vain.

Were we to judge from the ardent attachment which the abettors of strict communion, on all occasions, profess to the positive institutes of the gospel, we should suppose, that the object of their efforts was to raise them to their just estimation, and to rescue them from desuetude and neglect. We should conjecture that they arose from a solicitude to revive certain practices which had prevailed in the purest ages of the church, but were afterwards laid aside, just as the ordinance of preaching was, during the triumph of the Papacy, almost consigned to oblivion ; and that the consequence of complying with their suggestions, would be a more complete exhibition of Christianity in all its parts. But their zeal operates in quite a contrary direction. The success of their scheme tends not to extend the practice of baptism, no, not in a single instance, but merely to exclude the Lord's supper. Leaving the former appointment unaltered and untouched, it merely proposes to abolish the latter ; and as far as it is practicable, to lay the Christian world under an interdict. The real state of the case is as follows :—On the subject of baptism, and particularly whether it is applicable to infants, opinions are divided, and the majority have come, as we conceive, to an erroneous conclusion. How do they propose to remedy this evil ? By throwing all manner of obstacles in the way of an approach to the Lord's table, and as far as their power extends, rendering it impracticable, by clogging it with a condition at which conscience revolts. They propose to punish men for the involuntary neglect of one ordinance, by compelling them to abandon the other ; and because they are uneasy at perceiving them perform but one half of their duty, oblige them, as far as lies in their power, to omit the whole. I must confess, I feel no partiality for those violent remedies, which under the pretence of reforming, destroy ; or for that passion for order which would rather witness the entire desolation of

the sanctuary, than a defalcation of its rites ; and in spite of all the efforts of sophistry, I must be permitted to believe, that our Lord's express injunction on his followers, " Do this in remembrance of me," is a better reason for the celebration of the communion than can be adduced for its neglect.

SECTION III.

The argument from apostolical precedent, and from the different significations of the two institutions, considered.

IN vindication of their practice, our opponents are wont to urge the order of administration in the primitive and apostolic practice. They remind us that the members of the primitive church were universally baptized ; that if we acknowledge its constitution in that respect to be expressive of the mind of Christ, we are bound to follow that precedent, and that to deviate from it in this particular is virtually to impeach either the wisdom of our Lord, or the fidelity of his Apostles.*

With respect to the *universality* of the practice of Christian baptism, having already stated our views, it is not necessary to repeat what has already been advanced, or to recapitulate the reasons on which we found our opinion, that it was not extended to such as were converted previous to our Lord's resurrection. Subsequently to that period, we admit, without hesitation, that the converts to the Christian faith submitted to that ordinance, prior to their reception into the Christian church. As little are we disposed to deny, that it is at present the duty of the sincere believer to follow their example, and that, supposing him to be clearly convinced of the nature and import of baptism, he would be guilty of a criminal irregularity who neglected to attend to it, previous to his entering into Christian fellowship. On the obligation of both the positive rites enjoined in the New Testament, and the prior claim of baptism to the attention of such as are properly enlightened on the subject, we have no dispute. All we contend for is, that they do not so depend one upon the other, that the conscientious omission

* "The order of administration," says Mr. Booth, "in the primitive and apostolic practice, now demands our notice. That the Apostles, when endued with power from on high, understood our Lord in the sense for which we plead, and practised accordingly, is quite evident. Then they that gladly received his word were, what? admitted to the Lord's table? No, but baptized :—*And the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls ; and they continued stedfast in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.* If our brethren do not look upon the apostolic precedent as expressive of the mind of Christ, and as a pattern for future imitation, to the end of the world, they must consider the Apostles as either ignorant of our Lord's will, or as unfaithful in the performance of it."—*Booth's Apol.* pp. 47, 48.

of the first, forfeits the privilege, or cancels the duty, of observing the second ; nor are we able to perceive, that what in the present instance is styled apostolic precedent, at all decides the question. To attempt to determine under what circumstances the highest precedent possesses the form of law, involves a difficult and delicate inquiry ; for while it is acknowledged that much deference is due to primitive example, there were certain usages in apostolical times, which few would attempt to revive. There is one general rule, however, applicable to the subject, which is, that no matter of fact is entitled to be considered as an authoritative precedent, which *necessarily* arose out of existing circumstances, so that in the then present state of things, it could not fail to have occurred. The foundation of this rule is obvious. Nothing is of the nature of law, but what emanates from the will of the legislator ; but when a particular fact, recorded in an historical narration, is so situated, that the contrary would have appeared incongruous or absurd ; in other words, when it could not fail to be the result of previous occurrences, such a fact is destitute of the essential characteristic of a law ; it has no apparent dependance upon a superior will.

Hence many practices occur in the history of the apostolic transactions, which it is universally admitted we are not obliged to imitate. It is an unquestionable fact, that the eucharist was first celebrated with unleavened bread, on the evening, in an upper room, and to the Jews only ; but as we distinctly perceive, that these particulars originated in the peculiar circumstances of the time, we are far from considering them as binding. On the same principle we account for the members of the primitive church consisting only of such as were baptized, without erecting that circumstance into an invariable rule of action. When we recollect, that no error or mistake subsisted, or could subsist, among Christians at that period, we are compelled to regard it as the necessary consequence of the state of opinions then prevalent. While all the faithful concurred in their interpretation of the law which enjoins it, how is it possible to suppose it neglected ? or whence could rebaptized communicants have been drawn ? Is this circumstance, to which so much importance is attached, of such a nature, that no account can be given of it, but upon the principle of our opponents ? or is it the necessary consequence of the then actual situation of the church ? If the latter be admitted, it ceases for the reason already alleged, to be a precedent, or a rule for the direction of future times.

We are willing to go a step further, and to acknowledge that he who, convinced of the divine origin of Christianity by the ministry of the Apostles, had refused to be baptized, would at that period

have been justly debarred from receiving the sacramental elements. While the Apostles were yet living, and daily exemplifying the import of their commission before the eyes of the people, it would have been impossible to pretend ignorance, nor could that sincerity fail to be suspected, which was not accompanied with an implicit submission to their authority.

“He that receiveth you,” said our Lord, “receiveth me; he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me.” Agreeably to which, we find that the disciple whom Jesus loved, did not scruple to use the following language; “By this ye know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error; he that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.” Such a conduct was perfectly proper. As there can be but two guides in religion, reason and authority, and every man must form his belief, either by following the light of his own mind, or the information and instruction he derives from others, so it is equally evident it is only by the last of these methods, that the benefit of a new revelation can be diffused. Either we must suppose an infinite multitude of miracles performed on the minds of individuals to convey the knowledge of supernatural truths, or that one or more are thus preternaturally enlightened, and invested with a commission to speak in the name of God to others; endowed at the same time with such peculiar powers, such a control over nature, or such a foresight of future contingencies, as shall be sufficient to accredit or establish his mission.

He who refuses to submit to the guidance of persons thus attested and accredited, must be considered as virtually renouncing the revelation imparted, and as the necessary consequence, forfeiting his interest in its blessings. On these grounds, it is not difficult to perceive, that a primitive convert, or rather pretended convert, who without doubting, that baptism, in the way in which we practise it, formed a part of the apostolic commission, had refused compliance, would have been deemed unworthy Christian communion, not on account of any specific connexion betwixt the two ordinances, but on account of his evincing a spirit totally repugnant to the mind of Christ. By rejecting the only authority established upon earth for the direction of conscience, and the termination of doubts and controversies, he would, undoubtedly, have been repelled as a contumacious schismatic. But what imaginable resemblance is there betwixt such a mode of procedure, and the conduct of our Pædobaptist brethren, who oppose no legitimate authority, impeach no part of the apostolic testimony, but mistaking (in our judgement at least) its import in one particular, decline a practice, which many of them would be the first to comply with, were they once convinced it was the dictate of duty, and the will of heaven. In the one case, we perceive open rebellion, in the

other, involuntary error : in the one, the pride which opposes itself to the dictates of inspired wisdom, in the other, a specimen (an humbling one it is true) of that infirmity, in consequence of which, we all see but in part, and know but in part. Since whatever degree of prejudice or inattention we may be disposed to impute to the abettors of infant sprinkling, the principles on which they proceed are essentially different from those which could alone have occasioned the introduction of that practice in apostolic times, we are at a loss to conceive the propriety of classing them together, or of animadverting upon them with equal severity. The Apostles would have repelled from their communion men, who while they professed to be followers of Christ, refused submission to his inspired messengers ; in other words, they would have rejected some of the worst of men : therefore, say our opponents, we feel ourselves justified in excluding multitudes whom we acknowledge to be the best. I am at a loss, whether most to admire the logic, the equity, or the modesty of such a conclusion.

Besides, this reasoning from precedent is of so flexible a nature, that it may with equal ease be employed in a contrary direction, and be turned to the annoyance of our opponents. As it is an acknowledged fact, that in primitive times, all the faithful were admitted to an equality of participation in every Christian privilege, to repel the great majority of them on account of an error, acknowledged not to be fundamental, is at once, a wide departure from the apostolic example, and a palpable contradiction to the very words employed in its first institution ; “drink ye all of it ; do this in remembrance of me :” words addressed, as has already been proved, to persons who had not received Christian baptism. If it be replied, that though all Christians originally communicated, yet from the period of the Pentecost, at least, they were all previously initiated by immersion, the inquiry returns, were they baptized on account of the necessary connexion of that appointment with the eucharist, or purely in deference to the apostolic injunction ? To assert the former, would be palpably begging the question ; and if the latter is affirmed, we reply, that as they practised as they did, in deference to the will of God, so our Pædobaptist brethren, in declining the practice which we adopt, regulate their conduct by the same principle.

The show of conformity to apostolic precedent is with the advocates of strict communion, and nothing more ; the substance and reality are with us. Their conformity is to the letter, ours to the spirit ; theirs, circumstantial and incidental ; ours, radical and essential. In withholding the signs from those who are in possession of the thing signified, in refusing to communicate the symbols of the great sacrifice, to those who are equally with themselves

sprinkled by its blood and sharers of its efficacy, in dividing the regenerate into two classes, believers and communicants, and confining the church to the narrow limits of a sect, they have violated more maxims of antiquity, and receded further from the example of the Apostles, than any class of Christians on record.

We live in a mutable world, and the diversity of sentiment, which has arisen in the Christian church on the subject of baptism, has placed things in a new situation, and has given birth to a case which can be determined only by an appeal to the general principles of the gospel, and to those injunctions in particular, which are designed to regulate the conduct of Christians, whose judgements in points of secondary moment differ. These we shall have occasion to discuss in another part of this treatise, where it will, we trust, be satisfactorily shewn, that we are furnished with a clue fully sufficient for our guidance: and when we consider the impossibility of comprehending in any code whatever, every possible combination of future occurrences and events, we shall perceive the necessity of having recourse to those large and comprehensive maxims, which the prospective wisdom of the Father of lights, and the Author of revelation, has abundantly supplied.

Were it not, that more are capable of numbering arguments, than of weighing them, the mention of the following might be omitted. The signification of the two positive ordinances of the gospel is urged in proof of the necessity of baptism preceding the Lord's supper. The first, we are reminded by our opponents, is styled by theologians, the sacrament of *regeneration*, or of initiation; the second, the sacrament of *nutrition*.* To argue from metaphors is rarely a conclusive mode of reasoning, but if it were, the regenerate state of our Pædobaptist brethren would surely afford a much better reason for admitting them to the *sacrament of nutrition*, than their misconception of a particular command for prohibiting them, unless we choose to affirm, that the shadow is of more importance than the substance, or that the sacrament of nutrition is not intended to nourish.

Their actual possession of spiritual life, in consequence of their union to the head of the church, necessarily implies a title to every Christian privilege, by which such a life is cherished and maintained, unless there were an express prohibition to the contrary;

* "In submitting to baptism," says Mr. Booth, "we have an emblem of our union and communion with Jesus Christ, as our great representative, in his death, burial, and resurrection. And as in baptism, we profess to have renewed spiritual life; so in communicating at the Lord's table, we have the emblem of that heavenly food by which we live, by which we grow, and by virtue of which we hope to live for ever. Hence, theological writers have often called baptism the sacrament of *regeneration*, or of initiation, and the Lord's supper, the sacrament of *nutrition*."—*Booth's Apology*.

nor is it to be doubted, that the acknowledgment of Pædobaptists, as Christians, implies a competence to enter into the full import of the rites commemorative of our Lord's death and passion. To consider the Lord's supper, however, as a mere commemoration of that event, is to entertain a very inadequate view of it. If we credit St. Paul, it is also a *federal rite*, in which, in token of our reconciliation with God, we eat and drink in his presence ; it is a feast upon a sacrifice, by which we become partakers at the altar, not less really, though in a manner, more elevated and spiritual, than those who, under the ancient economy, presented their offerings in the temple. In this ordinance, the cup is a spiritual participation of the blood, the bread of the body of the crucified Saviour ; (1 Cor. 11: 16.) and as our Pædobaptist brethren are allowed to be in covenant with God, their title to every federal rite follows of course, unless it is barred by some clear, unequivocal declaration of Scripture ; instead of which we meet with nothing on the opposite side, but precarious conjectures, and remote analogies.

Our opponents are extremely fond of representing baptism under the New Testament, as essential as circumcision under the old, inferring from thence, that no unbaptized person is admissible to the eucharist, for the same reason that none who was not circumcised, was permitted to partake of the paschal feast. But besides that this is to reason from analogy, a practice against which, when applied to the discussion of positive institutes, they on other occasions earnestly protest, the analogy fails in the most essential points. Circumcision is expressly stated as a necessary condition of admission to the passover : a similar statement respecting baptism will decide the controversy. The neglect of circumcision, which could proceed from nothing but presumptuous impiety, incurred the sentence of *excision ; that soul shall be cut off from the people*. Whatever may be meant besides by that commination, it will not be doubted, that it included the entire forfeiture of the advantages of that peculiar covenant, which God was pleased to establish with the Israelitish people ; and the exclusion from the paschal feast, as well as from the other sacrifices, was the necessary appendage of that forfeiture.

The most violent Baptist will not presume to insinuate, that the neglect of baptism, from a misconception of its nature, is exposed to a similar penalty. It is evident, from the history of the Old Testament, that an Israelite became disqualified for sharing in whatever privileges distinguished that nation, only in consequence of such a species of criminality as cut him off from the covenant. An interest in that covenant, (the particular nature of which it is not necessary to insist upon) and a free access to all the privileges

and institutions of the Jewish people, were inseparable, so that nothing would have appeared to an ancient Jew more absurd, than to disunite the covenant itself, from the federal rites by which it was ratified and confirmed. The invention of this ingenious paradox belongs exclusively to the abettors of strict communion, who in the same breath affirm, that Pædobaptists are entitled to all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant, and forbidden to commemorate it; and scruple not to assert, that though interested as much as themselves in the great sacrifice, it would be presumption in them to approach the sacred symbols, which are appointed for no other purpose but to hold it forth. It is certainly with a very ill grace, that the champions of such monstrous and unparalleled positions, ridicule their opponents for inventing a new and eccentric theology.*

Before I dismiss this head, I must remark, that in insisting upon the prior claim which baptism possesses to the attention of a Christian convert, the advocates of strict communion triumph without an opponent. We know of none who contend for the propriety of inverting the natural order of the Christian sacraments, where they can both be attended to, that is, when the nature of each is clearly understood and confessed. To administer them under any other circumstances, it will be acknowledged, is impracticable. We administer baptism, let it be remembered, *in every instance* in which our opponents will allow it ought to be administered; and the only difference is, that we have fellowship, in another ordinance, with those members of the body of Christ, whom they reject. Let it once be demonstrated, that the obligation of commemorating the Saviour's death, is not sufficiently supported by his express injunction, but derives its force and validity from its inseparable connexion with a preceding sacrament, and we are prepared to abandon our practice, as a presumptuous innovation on the laws of Christ. Till then we shall not be much moved by the charge of claiming a dispensing power with which we are frequently accused—a power which I presume no Protestant ever

* “The last century,” says Mr. Booth, page 36, “was the grand era of improvement, of prodigious improvement, in light and liberty. In light, as well divine as philosophical, by the labors of a Bacon, a Boyle, and a Newton. In pretended theological knowledge, by those of a Jesse or a Bunyan. Did the former, by deep researches into the system of nature, surprise and instruct the world, by discoveries of which mankind has never before conceived? The latter, penetrating into the gospel system, amused mankind by casting new light on the positive institutions of Jesus Christ; and by placing baptism among things of little importance in the Christian religion, of which no ancient theologian ever dreamed—none we have reason to think, that ever loved the Lord Redeemer.” A little after he adds, “the practical claim of dispensing power by Jesse and Bunyan, made way for the *inglorious* liberty of treating positive institutions in the house of God just as professors please.”

dreamed of usurping, and the assumption of which implies such impiety as ought to render a Christian reluctant to urge such a charge.

To remind us of "the destruction of Nadab and Abihu by fire from Heaven, the breach that was made upon Uzzah, the stigma fixed, and the curses denounced upon Jerusalem, together with the fall and ruin of all mankind by our first father's disobedience to a positive command," is more calculated to inflame the passions, than to elicit truth, or conduct the controversy to a satisfactory issue. When the sole inquiry is, what *is* the law of Christ, and we are fully persuaded that our interpretation of it is more natural and reasonable than that of our opponents, it is not a little absurd, to charge us with assuming a claim of dispensing with its authority. We know that he commanded his followers to be baptized; we know also, that he commanded them to shew forth his death till he came; but where shall we look for a title of his law, which forbids such as sincerely, though erroneously, believe themselves to have complied with the first, to attend to the last of these injunctions? Where is the scriptural authority for *resting* the obligation of the eucharist, not on the precept that enjoins it, but on the previous reception of baptism? As the Scripture is totally silent on this point, we are not disposed to accept the officious assistance of our brethren in supplying its deficiency; and beg permission to remind them, that to add to the word of God, is equally criminal with taking away from it.

Do we neglect the administration of that rite to any class of persons, whose state of mind is such as would render it acceptable to God? Do we neglect to illustrate and enforce it in our public ministrations? Are we accustomed to insinuate, that serious inquiry into the mind of Christ on this subject, is of little, or no importance? Are we found to decline its administration in any case whatever, in which our accusers would not equally decline it? Nothing of this can be alleged. Do they argue from the language of the original institute, from the examples of Scripture, and the precedent of the early ages, that it is the duty of believers without exception, to be immersed in the name of Jesus? So do we. Are they disposed to look upon such as have neglected, whether from inattention or prejudice, to perform this duty, as *mistaken Christians*? We also consider them in the same light. In what respect then, are we guilty of dispensing with divine laws? Merely because we are incapable of perceiving, that an involuntary mistake on this subject, disqualifies for Christian communion. But how extremely unjust to load us, on that account, with the charge of assuming a dispensing power, when the only ground on which we maintain our opinion, whether true or false, is our conviction

that it is founded on a legitimate interpretation of the oracles of God. The dispute is not concerning their authority, but their meaning; and we dispense with baptism in no other sense, than that of denying it to be in all cases essential to communion; in which, whether we are mistaken or not, is a point open to controversy; but to be guilty first of a *misnomer* in defining our sentiments, and afterwards to convert an odious and erroneous appellation into an argument, is the height of injustice.

With what propriety our practice is compared to that of the church of Rome, in confining the communion to one kind, the intelligent reader will be at no loss to perceive.* In that as in various other instances, that Church in order to raise the dignity of the priesthood, assumes a power of mutilating a divine ordinance. We are chargeable with no mutilation, nor presume in the smallest particular to innovate in the celebration of either sacraments; we merely refuse to acknowledge that dependence, one upon the other, on which the confidence of our opponents is so ill sustained by the silence of Scripture.

We will close this part of the discussion by remarking, that there is a happy equivocation in the word *dispense*, which has contributed not a little to its introduction into the present controversy. It may either mean, that we do not insist upon baptism as an indispensable condition of communion, in which sense the charge is true, but nothing to the purpose, since it is a mere statement, in other words, of our actual practice. Or it may intend, that we knowingly and deliberately deviate from the injunctions of Scripture; a serious accusation, which requires not to be asserted, but proved.

SECTION IV.

Our supposed opposition to the universal suffrages of the church considered.

In admitting to our communion those whom we esteem *unbaptized*, we are accused of a presumptuous departure from the sentiments of all parties and denominations throughout the Christian

* "It must, I think, be acknowledged," says Mr. Booth, "even by our brethren themselves, that we have as good a warrant for omitting an essential branch of an ordinance, or to reverse the order in which the *constituent parts* of an ordinance were originally administered, as we have to lay aside a divine institution, or to change the order in which two different appointments were first fixed. And if so, were a reformed and converted Catholic, still retaining the popish error of communion in *one kind* only, desirous of having fellowship with our brethren at the Lord's table; they must, if they would act consistently, on their present hypothesis, admit him to partake of the bread, though from a principle of conscience, he absolutely refused the wine in that sacred institution."—*Booth's Apol.* p. 51.

world, who, however they may have differed upon other subjects, have unanimously concurred in considering baptism as a necessary preliminary to communion.*

The first remark which occurs on this mode of reasoning is, that it is merely an *argumentum ad verecundiam*, an attempt to overawe by the weight of authority, without pretending to enter into the merits of the controversy. It assumes for its basis the impossibility of the universal prevalence of error, which, if it be once admitted, all hopes of extending the boundaries of knowledge must be relinquished. My next observation is, that it comes with peculiar infelicity from the members of a sect, who, upon a subject of much greater moment have presumed to relinquish the precedent, and arraign the practice of the whole Christian world, as far at least as they have been exhibited in these latter ages.

Quis tulerit Gracchos, de seditione querentes ?

After setting an example of revolt, it is too late for them to inculcate the duty of submission.

The question of the necessary dependance of communion on baptism, being of no practical moment whatever, in any other circumstances than our own, it is not to be wondered at, if it has never been subjected to scrutiny; since cases of conscience, among which this inquiry may be classed, are rarely if ever investigated, until circumstances occur, which render their discussion necessary. But as infant sprinkling is valid in the esteem of all but the Baptists, and there is no pretence for considering the latter as unbaptized, it is not easy to conceive what motive could exist for making it an object of serious attention. That crude and erroneous conceptions should prevail upon questions, the decision of which could have no influence on practice, will not surprise those who reflect, that truth has been usually elicited by contro-

* This charge is urged with much declamatory vehemence by Mr. Booth in his Apology:—"A sentiment so peculiar, and a conduct so uncommon," he says, "in regard to this institution, ought to be well supported by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. For were all the Christian churches now in the world asked, except those few who plead for free communion, whether they thought it lawful to admit *unbaptized* believers to fellowship at the Lord's table, there is reason to believe they would readily unite in the declaration of Paul, *we have no such custom, neither the churches of God that were before us*. Yes, considering the novelty of their sentiments and conduct, and what a contradiction they are to the faith and order of the whole Christian church, considering that it never was disputed, as far as I can learn, prior to the sixteenth century, by orthodox or heterodox, by Papist or Protestant, whether *unbaptized* believers should be admitted to the Lord's table; they all agreeing in the contrary practice, however much they differed in matters of equal importance, it may be reasonably expected, and it is by us justly demanded, that the truth of their sentiment, and the rectitude of their conduct, should be *proved, fully proved*, from the records of inspiration."—Booth's Apol. p. 34.

versy, and that on subjects of too great importance to be entirely overlooked, opinions have prevailed to a great extent, which are now universally exploded. Though the employment of coercion in the affairs of conscience, is equally repugnant to the dictates of reason and of Scripture, it was for ages, successively resorted to, by every party in their turn ; nor was it till towards the close of the seventeenth century, that the principle of toleration was established on a broad and scientific basis, by the immortal writings of Milton and of Locke. These reflections are obvious ; but there are others, which tend more immediately to annihilate the objection under consideration. It is well known, that from a very early period, the most extravagant notions prevailed in the church, with respect to the efficacy of baptism, and its absolute necessity in order to attain salvation. The descent of the human mind from the spirit to the letter, from what is vital and intellectual, to what is ritual and external in religion, is the true source of idolatry and superstition, in all the multifarious forms they have assumed ; and as it began early to corrupt the religion of nature, or more properly of patriarchal tradition, so it soon obscured the lustre, and destroyed the simplicity of the Christian institute. In proportion as genuine devotion declined, the love of pomp and ceremony increased ; the few and simple rites of Christianity were extolled beyond all reasonable bounds ; new ones were invented, to which mysterious meanings were attached, till the religion of the New Testament became, in process of time, as insupportable a yoke as the Mosaic law. The first effects of this spirit are discernible in the ideas entertained of the ordinance, so closely connected with the subject of the present treatise. From an erroneous interpretation of the figurative language of a few passages in Scripture, in which the sign is identified with the thing signified, very similar to the mistake which afterwards led to transubstantiation, it was universally supposed, that baptism was invariably accompanied with a supernatural effect, which totally changed the state and character of the candidate, and constituted him a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of Heaven. Hence, it was almost constantly denoted by the terms *illumination*, *regeneration*, and others, expressive of the highest operations of the Spirit ; and as it was believed to obtain the plenary remission of all past sins, it was often, in order to insure that benefit, purposely deferred to the latest period of life. Thus Eusebius informs us, that the Emperor Constantine, “ finding his end fast approaching, judged it a fit season for purifying himself from his offences, and cleansing his soul from that guilt, which, in common with other mortals, he had contracted ; which he believed was to be effected by the power of mysterious words, and the saving laver.” “ This,” said he, addressing

the surrounding bishops, "is the period I have so long hoped and prayed for, the period of obtaining the salvation of God." Passing with the utmost rapidity through the preparatory stage, that of a catechumen, he hastened to what he regarded as his consummation; and no sooner was the ceremony completed, than he arrayed himself in white garments, and laid aside the imperial purple, in token of his bidding adieu to all secular concerns. (Euseb. in vita Constan. l. 4. c. 61, 62.) We have here a fair specimen of the sentiments which were universally adopted upon this subject in ancient times. Even Justin Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the second century, confounds baptism with regeneration. "Whoever," says he, "believe the things which are affirmed by us to be true, and promise to live accordingly, are afterwards conducted to a place where there is water, and are regenerated by the same method of regeneration which we have experienced." (Apol. p. 159, Ed. 1651.) Theophilus, a contemporary writer, and the sixth bishop of Antioch, holds the same language. Tertullian, the earliest and most learned of the Latin Fathers, exclaims with rapture, "O happy sacrament, by which, being washed from the former sins of our blindness, we are delivered unto eternal life." (De Baptismo, Ed. 1676, p. 224.) And agreeable to the fantastic style of imagery, which characterizes his writings, he appears to be particularly delighted with denominating Christians, little fishes, who are born in water, and are safe only in that element. Were we to attempt accurately to trace the progress of these opinions, in the first ages, and adequately to represent the extent of their prevalence, we should be under the necessity, by numberless quotations from the Fathers, of extending this inquiry to a most unreasonable length.

Suffice it to remark, that there is scarcely a writer in the three first centuries, to descend no lower, who has not spoken upon this subject in a manner, which the advocates for strict communion at least, would deem unscriptural and improper; scarcely one from whom we should not be taught to infer, that baptism was absolutely necessary to salvation. That this is the doctrine, which pervades the formularies of the Church of England, is too evident to require to be insisted on; nor is it less so, that similar sentiments on this head are exhibited, to a greater or less extent, in the creeds of most, if not all established churches. Is it surprising then, that those who contend for baptism as essential to salvation, should consider it as an essential prerequisite to communion? Or is it not a much juster occasion for surprise, that our opponents should urge us with an inference, which it is acknowledged was deduced from erroneous premises, as though we were under the

necessity of admitting a conclusion, while the only argument, by which it is supported, is given up?*

For our parts, we must be permitted to look with suspicion, on the genuine product of error; no more expecting to derive truth from erroneous premises, than grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. In the present instance, there is no doubt, that the opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism, previous to communion, sprang from those lofty and superstitious ideas, respecting its efficacy, which our opponents would be the first to disclaim. Ask a Roman Catholic, a Lutheran, or a member of the Church of England, on what ground he rests the absolute necessity of the baptismal rite, as a qualification for the eucharist; and each of them will concur in reminding you, that it is by that ordinance, we become the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. The Augsburg Confession, to which all the Lutheran churches are supposed to assent, and which was solemnly presented to Charles the Fifth at the Imperial Diet, as the authentic exhibition of their sentiments, expresses itself in the following terms; "Concerning baptism, they (the followers of Luther) teach that it is *necessary to salvation*; that by baptism is offered the grace of God; and that children are to be baptized, who being presented to God by baptism, are received into the grace of God. They condemn the Anabaptists, who disapprove of the baptism of children, and affirm, that children are *saved* without baptism." (Augs. Conf. Art. 9.) Some of the most learned divines of the Church of England have contended, that baptism is not only regeneration, but justification; and have made elaborate attempts to explode every other notion of that blessing. (See Waterland's Sermon on that subject.)

Such are the principles whence this vaunted unanimity is derived—principles, which our brethren reprobate on all occasions, while with a strange inconsistency they accuse us of presumption in refusing our assent to their legitimate consequences. Let it be recollected also, that the points in which they, in common with ourselves, dissent from a vast majority of the professors of Christianity, are of incomparably more importance than the particular in which they agree; for whether baptism be, on all occasions, a necessary preliminary to communion, is a trivial question, compared to that which respects the identity of baptism with regeneration.

* When I consider the firm hold which these unscriptural ideas respecting baptism had taken of the minds of men, throughout all parts of the Christian world at an early period, and recollect the confidence with which ancient writers assert the impossibility even of infants being saved without baptism, the practice of infant sprinkling seems an almost necessary result. Who with such a conviction, possessed of the common feelings of a parent, could fail to secure to his infant offspring such infinite benefits?

The argument from authority, however, when fairly stated, is entirely in our favor; nor would it be easy to assign an example of bolder deviation from the universal practice of the Christian church, than the conduct of our opponents supplies. They are the only persons in the world of whom we have either heard or read, who contend for the exclusion of genuine Christians from the Lord's table; who ever attempted to distinguish them into two classes, such as are entitled to commemorate their Saviour's death, and such as are excluded from that privilege. In what page of the voluminous records of the Church is such a distinction to be traced? Or what intimation shall we find in Scripture of an intention to create such an invidious disparity among the members of the same body? Did it ever enter the conception of any but Baptists, that a right to the sign could be separated from the thing signified; or that there could be a description of persons interested in all the blessings of the Christian covenant, yet not entitled to partake of its sacraments and seals?

In the judgement of all religious communities besides, and in every period of the Church, excommunication or exclusion has been considered as a stigma, never to be inflicted but on men of ill lives, or on the abettors of heresy and schism; and though innumerable instances have occurred, in which the best of men have in fact been excluded, they were either accused of fundamental error, or adjudged on account of their obstinate resistance to the authority of the Church, to have forfeited the privileges of Christians. They were not excommunicated under the character of mistaken brethren, which is the light in which we profess to consider Pædobaptists, but as incurable heretics and schismatics. The Puritans were expelled the Church of England on the same principle; and although at the Restoration, a vindictive spirit was unquestionably the chief motive to those disgraceful proceedings, yet the pretensions of ecclesiastical authority were carried so high in those unhappy times, as to furnish the pretext for considering them as contumacious contemners of the power, and disturbers of the peace of the Church. In the whole course of ecclesiastical proceedings, no maxim was more fully recognized than that the sword of excommunication cut asunder the ties of fraternity, and consigned the offender, unless he repented, to hopeless perdition.

In some dissenting societies also, it is true, creeds are established which every candidate for admission is expected to subscribe; and though these summaries of Christian doctrine frequently contain articles, which, admitting them to be true, are not fundamental, they were originally deemed such by their fabricators, or supposed at least to be accompanied with such a plenitude of evidence as no sincere inquirer could resist; and they are continued under the same persuasion.

The right of rejecting those whom Christ has received ; of refusing the communion of eminently holy men, on account of unessential differences of opinion, is not the avowed tenet of any sect or community in Christendom, with the exception of the majority of the Baptists, who, while they are at variance with the whole world on a point of such magnitude, are loud in accusing their brethren of singularity. If we have presumed to resist the current of opinion, it is on a subject of no practical moment ; it respects an obscure and neglected corner of theology ; while their singularity is replete with the most alarming consequences, destroys at once the unity of the Church, and pronounces a sentence of excommunication on the whole Christian world.

Having without disguise exhibited in their full force the reasoning of the advocates of strict communion, and replied to it in the best manner we are able, it must be left to the impartial reader to determine on which side the evidence preponderates ; of which he will be able to judge more completely, when we have stated at large the grounds of the opposite practice, which we have reserved for the second part of this treatise ; where we shall have an opportunity of noticing some minor objections, which could not be so conveniently adverted to in the former.

PART II.

THE POSITIVE GROUNDS ON WHICH WE JUSTIFY THE PRACTICE OF MIXED COMMUNION.

SECTION I.

Free communion urged, from the obligation of brotherly love.

THAT we are cominanded, in terms the most absolute, to cultivate a sincere and warm attachment to the members of Christ's body, and that no branch of Christian duty is inculcated more frequently, or with more force, will be admitted without controversy. Our Lord instructs us to consider it as the principal mark or feature by which his followers are to be distinguished in every age. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. As I have loved you, ye ought also to love one another;" whence it is evident, that the pattern we are to follow, is, the love which Christ bore to his Church, which is undoubtedly extended indiscriminately to every member. The cultivation of this disposition is affirmed to be one of the most essential objects of the Christian revelation, as well as the most precious fruit of that faith by which it is embraced. "Seeing," says St. Peter, "ye have purified your hearts by obeying the truth unto an unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Agreeably to which, the beloved disciple affirms it to be the chief evidence of our being in a state of grace and salvation. "By this we know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Let it also be remembered, that the mode in which we are commanded to exhibit and express this most eminent grace of the Spirit, is the preservation of union, a careful avoidance of every temper and practice which might produce alienation and division. To this purpose, St. Paul reminds us of that union which subsists betwixt the several parts of the body, the harmony with which its respective functions are carried on, where the noblest organ is incapable of dispensing with the action of the meanest, together with that quick feeling of sympathy which pervades the whole; all which, he tells us, is contrived and adjusted to prevent a schism in the body. In applying this illustration to the subject before us, it is impossible not to perceive, that when one part of Christ's mystical body refuses

to co-operate with another in a principal spiritual function, such as communing at the Lord's table, that very evil subsists against which we are so anxiously guarded ; and what is more extraordinary, subsists upon the principle we are opposing, by divine appointment. In the last prayer our Saviour uttered, in which he expressly includes all who should hereafter believe, he earnestly intreats that they may be all one, even as he and his Father were one, that the world might be furnished with a convincing evidence of his mission. For some ages the object of that prayer was realized, in the harmony which prevailed amongst Christians, whose religion was a bond of union, more strict and tender than the ties of consanguinity ; and with the appellation of brethren, they associated all the sentiments of endearment that relation implied. To see men of the most contrary character and habits, the learned and the rude, the most polished and the most uncultivated, the inhabitants of countries alienated from each other by institutions the most repugnant, and by contests the most violent, forgetting their ancient animosity, and blending into one mass, at the command of a person whom they had never seen, and who had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world, was an astonishing spectacle. Such a sudden assimilation of the most discordant materials, such love issuing from hearts naturally selfish, and giving birth to a new race and progeny, could be ascribed to nothing but a divine interposition ; it was an experimental proof of the commencement of that kingdom of God, that celestial economy, by which the powers of the future world are imparted to the present. When we turn from contemplating this, to the practice under consideration, we see an opposite phenomenon ; a sect of Christians coming to an open rupture and separation in point of communion with the whole Christian world ; and we ask, whether it be possible to reconcile such a conduct with the import of our Saviour's prayer. If it is not, it must be condemned as antichristian, unless we hesitate to affirm, that whatever is repugnant to the mind of Christ, merits that appellation. Let it be remembered too, that though the prayer we have adduced was uttered by him who possessed a perfect knowledge of futurity, and was thoroughly apprised of the diversities of sentiment which would arise among his followers, he was not deterred by that consideration from comprehending in this his desire of union, all who should hereafter believe on his name.

Whatever attachment our opponents may profess to those whom they exclude, their behavior, it must be acknowledged, is so ill adapted to accredit their professions, that in the eyes of the world, who judge by sensible appearances, and are strangers to subtle distinctions, such a proceeding will inevitably be considered

as a practical declaration, that the persons from whom they separate, are *not* Christians. There is no reason to doubt that the precepts of the gospel on this, as well as every other breach of morals, are to be interpreted on a liberal scale; and that when they enjoin any particular disposition in general terms, we must consider the injunction as comprehending all its natural demonstrations, all its genuine expressions. But to refuse the communion of sincere Christians, is not a natural expression of Christian love, but so diametrically opposite, that we may fairly put it to the conscience of those who contend for such a measure, whether they find it possible to carry it into execution without an inward struggle, without feeling emotions of sorrow and concern. It is to inflict a wound on the very heart of charity, for no fault, for none at least of which the offender is conscious, for none which such treatment has the remotest tendency to correct; and if this is not being guilty of "beating our fellow servant," we must despair of ascertaining the meaning of terms.

Were the children of the same parent, in consequence of the different construction they put on a disputed clause in their father's will, to refuse to eat at the same table, or to drink out of the same cup, it would be ridiculous for them to pretend that their attachment to each other remained undiminished; nor is it less so for Christians to assert that their withdrawing from communion with their brethren, is no interruption to their mutual harmony and affection. It is a serious and awful interruption, and will ever be considered in that light as long as the interior sentiments of the mind continue to be interpreted by their natural signs. I have known more instances than one, of good men complaining of the uneasiness, I might say the anguish, they felt on those occasions, when they witnessed some of their most intimate friends, persons of exalted piety, compelled, after joining in the other branches of worship, to withdraw from the Lord's table, as though "they had no part or lot in the matter." We have been accustomed to conceive that the dictates of the Holy Ghost were always in harmony with His operations, the precepts of the gospel with its spirit; and that nothing was enjoined as matter of duty on Christians, which offered violence to the best feelings of the renewed heart. We have always supposed, that by the law of Christ, we were called to mortify the old man only with his affections and lusts; but if the doctrine of our opponents be true, we shall be frequently summoned to the strange discipline of repressing the movements of Christian charity; and the practice of quenching the Spirit, instead of being regarded with horror, will become on many occasions an indispensable duty. For this new and unheard of conflict, in which the injunctions of Christ, and the dictates of his Spirit, pro-

pel us in opposite directions, we acknowledge ourselves unprepared.

In order to place this part of our subject in its strongest light, it is necessary to recur to what we have suggested before, respecting the two-fold import of the eucharist; that it is at first a feast upon a sacrifice, in which we are actual partakers by faith of the body and blood of the Redeemer offered upon the cross. Considered in this view, it is a *federal rite*, in which we receive the pledge of reconciliation, while we avouch the Lord to be our God, and surround his table as a part of his family. In its secondary import, it is intended as a solemn recognition of each other as members of Christ, and consequently, in the language of St. Paul, "as one body, and one bread." Now, we either acknowledge Pædobaptists to be Christians, or we do not. If not, let us speak out without reserve, and justify their exclusion at once, upon a broad and consistent basis. But if we reject a sentiment so illiberal, why refuse to unite with them in an appointment, which as far as its social import is concerned, has no other object than to express that fraternal attachment which we actually feel? Why select as the line of demarcation, the signal of disunion, that particular branch of worship, which, if we credit the inspired writers, was ordained in preference to every other, to be the symbol of Christian unity? That they are equally capable with ourselves of deriving the spiritual edification and improvement attached to this ordinance, is implied in the acknowledgement of their being Christians; while with respect to its import as a social act, or an act of communion, it implies neither more nor less than a recognizance of their claim to that title. It neither implies that they are baptized, nor the contrary; it has no retrospective view to that ordinance whatever; it implies neither more nor less than that they are members of Christ, and the objects consequently of that fraternal attachment, which our opponents themselves profess to feel.

SECTION II.

The practice of open communion argued, from the express injunction of Scripture respecting the conduct to be maintained by sincere Christians who differ in their religious sentiments.

We are expressly commanded in the Scriptures to tolerate in the church those diversities of opinion which are not inconsistent with salvation. We learn from the New Testament that a diversity of views subsisted in the times of the Apostles, betwixt the Jews and Gentile converts especially, the former retaining an attachment to the ancient law, and conceiving the most essential parts of it to be still in force; the latter from correcter views, re-

jecting it altogether. Some declined the use of certain kinds of meat forbidden by Moses, which others partook of without scruple; "one man esteemed one day above another," conscientiously observing the principal Jewish solemnities; "another esteemed every day alike." Among the Jewish converts, very different sentiments were entertained on the subject of circumcision, which all appear to have observed, though upon different principles; the more enlightened, like St Paul, from a solicitude to avoid unnecessary offence; the more superstitious, from a persuasion of its intrinsic obligation; and some because they believed it impossible to be saved without it; by which they endangered, to say the least, the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith. Against the sentiment last mentioned, we find St. Paul protesting with vehemence, and affirming with all the authority of his office, that "if any man was circumcised" with such views, "Christ profited him nothing;" but on no occasion proceeding to excommunication. The contention arising from the discussion of these points became so violent, that there appeared no method of terminating it, but to depute Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem, to consult the Apostles, who being solemnly convened on the occasion, issued the famous decree contained in the fifteenth of the Acts, by which the liberty of the gospel was confirmed, and the domineering spirit of Jewish zealots repressed. Though the success of this measure was great, it was not complete; a contrariety of opinion and of practice prevailed in the Church respecting Jewish ceremonies and observances, which considerably impaired its harmony. But instead of attempting to silence the remaining differences, by interposing his authority, St. Paul enjoins mutual toleration. "Him that is weak in faith receive ye not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? unto his own master he standeth, or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. xiv. 1. 5.)

To the same purpose are the following injunctions in the next chapter. "We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Now the God of peace and consolation grant you to be like minded one towards another according to Jesus Christ, that ye may with one mind and with one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." (Rom. xv. 1. 6, 7.) It cannot be denied, that

the passages we have adduced contain an apostolic canon for the regulation of the conduct of such Christians as agree in fundamentals, while they differ on points of subordinate importance ; by this canon they are commanded to exercise a reciprocal toleration and indulgence, and on no account to proceed to an open rupture. In order to apply it to the question under consideration, it is only necessary to consider to what description of persons the rules extends. The persons we are commanded to receive are the *weak in faith*. From the context, as well as from other parts of his epistles, it is certain that St. Paul means to designate by that appellation, sincere though erring Christians ; and in the instance then under contemplation, persons whose organs were not yet attuned to the blaze of gospel light and liberty, but who still clung to certain legal usages and distinctions, which more comprehensive views of revelation would have taught them to discard. The term *weak* is employed by the same writer in his epistle to the Corinthians, to denote an *erroneous* conscience, founded on a false persuasion of a certain power and efficacy attached to idols, of which they are really destitute. “ For himself,” he tells us, “ he knew that an idol was nothing, but every one was not possessed of that knowledge ; for some with conscience of the idol, with an interior conviction of its power, eat of the sacrifice, as a thing offered to an idol, and their conscience being *weak*, is defiled.” In the chapter whence these words are quoted, the term *weak* occurs not less than five times, and in each instance is used as synonymous with *erroneous*. I have insisted the more on this particular, in order to obviate a misconception which may arise from the acknowledged ambiguity of the word *weak*, which might be supposed to intend not a mistaken or erring mind, but a mind not sufficiently confirmed in the truth to which it assents. The certainty of its comprehending the case of error being once admitted, it is not necessary to multiply words to evince its bearing on the present controversy ; all that remains to be considered is the *principle* on which toleration is enforced, which every impartial reader must perceive, is the assumption, that the errors and mistakes to be tolerated are not *fundamental*, not of such a nature, in other words, as to prevent those who maintain them, from being accepted with God. “ Let not him that eateth, despise him who eateth not ; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth ; *for God hath received him.*” What can this mean, but that the error in question, to whichever side it be imputed, was of a description not to exclude its abettor from being an accepted servant of God, who, as he at present bears with his infirmity, is well able, whenever he pleases, to correct and remove it. He further proceeds to urge a spirit of forbearance, from a consideration of the perfect

integrity with which both parties maintained their respective opinions. Both were equally conscientious, and therefore, neither deserved to be treated with severity. "Wherefore receive ye one another," he adds, "even as Christ has received you, to the glory of the Father." When he thus commands Christians to receive each other, and enforces that duty by the example of Christ, it surely requires little penetration to perceive, that the practice enjoined ought to be commensurate to that example, and that this precept obliges us to receive all whom Christ has received. To interpret it otherwise, is to suppose the example irrelevant, and at once to annihilate the principle on which the injunction is founded.

Having paved the way to the conclusion, to which we would conduct the reader, we have only to remark, that in order to determine, how far these apostolic injunctions oblige us to tolerate the supposed error of our Pædobaptist brethren, we have merely to consider, whether it necessarily excludes them from being of the number of those, whom Christ has received, to the glory of the Father; whether it be possible to hold it with Christian sincerity; and finally, whether its abettors will stand or fall in the eternal judgement.

If these questions are answered, in the way which Christian candor irresistibly suggests, and which the judgement of our opponents approves, they conclude in favor of the admission of Pædobaptists to communion, not less forcibly than if they had been mentioned by name; and all attempts to evade them, must prove futile and abortive. If it be asserted, on the contrary, that a mistake on the subject of baptism is not comprehended in the above description, the passages adduced must be acknowledged irrelevant, and the whole controversy assumes a new aspect.

In the same spirit, the Apostle earnestly presses on the Philippians, the obligation of maintaining an uninterrupted harmony, and of cultivating a fraternal affection for each other, even while he is contemplating the possibility of their entertaining different apprehensions respecting truth and duty. After proposing himself as an example of the renunciation of legal hopes, and the serious study of perfection, he adds, "Let us, therefore, as many as are *perfect*, as many as have obtained correct and enlarged views of the gospel, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye are otherwise minded, or rather, *differently* minded, possessing different views and apprehensions on certain subjects, God will reveal even this unto you.* Nevertheless, wherein we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Here, the case of a

* See an admirable criticism on this passage in Bishop Horsey's Sermons, where the word *τερεως*, which is the key to the whole passage, is most happily elucidated.—Vol. 2, page 358.

diversity of sentiment, arising among Christians, is distinctly assumed, and the proper remedy suggested, which is not the exercise of a compulsory power, much less a separation of communion, but the ardent pursuit of Christian piety, accompanied with a humble dependance on divine teaching, which, it may reasonably be expected, will in due time correct the errors and imperfections of sincere believers. The conduct to be maintained in the mean while, was a cordial co-operation in every branch of worship and of practice, with respect to which they were agreed, without attempting to effect an unanimity by force ; and this is precisely the conduct which we contend should be maintained towards our Pædobaptist brethren. If they can be repelled from the Lord's table, without violating both the letter and the spirit of the preceding, and of similar admonitions, we are prepared, however reluctantly, to acquiesce in their exclusion ; but if they cannot, it deserves the serious consideration of the advocates of that measure, how they can reconcile the palpable infringement of such precepts, with the scrupulous adherence to the dictates of Scripture, to which they make such loud pretensions.

It will surely not be denied, that the precepts of the gospel are entitled to at least as much reverence, as apostolical precedents, when it is remembered, that the language of the former, as is befitting laws, is clear and determinate, while inferences deduced from the latter are frequently subject to debate ; not to remark, that if we consider the spirit of Scripture precedent, it will be found entirely in our favor.

When the abettors of exclusive communion are pressed with the conclusions, resulting from the passages we have quoted, and others of a similar tendency, their usual answer is, that the inspired writers make no mention of baptism on these occasions, and that no allusion is had to a diversity of opinion on the positive institutions of the gospel ; which is perfectly true, and perfectly foreign to the purpose for which it is alleged ; for the question at issue is not—What were the individual errors we are commanded to tolerate ; but—What is the *ground* on which that measure is enforced, and whether it be sufficiently comprehensive to include the Pædobaptists. That it is so, that they are actually included, can only be denied, by affirming, that they are precluded from divine acceptance, since it is precisely on that ground, that St. Paul rests the plea of toleration. To object to the application of a general principle to a particular case, that it is not the identical one which first occasioned its enunciation, is egregious trifling, and would go to the subversion of all general principles whatever, and consequently put an end to all reasoning. When a doubtful point in morality is to be decided, by an appeal to a general principle, it

is an essential property of such a principle, to extend to more particulars than one ; since, if it did not, it would cease to be a principle, and the point in question would be left to be decided by itself ; and if not self-evident, could admit of no decision whatever. When Nadab and Abihu, intoxicated with wine, offered strange fire upon the altar, and were struck with instant death for their presumption, Moses, by divine command, prescribed the following general rule for the worship of God ; “ I will be sanctified of all them that draw nigh unto me, and before all the people will I be glorified ? ” Who can be at a loss to perceive the absurdity of limiting that precept to the prohibition of intoxication, the crime which occasioned its first promulgation, instead of extending it to every instance of levity and impiety, in an approach to the divine Majesty ? My consciousness of the extreme weight of prejudice, which the truth has to encounter, together with the inaptitude of many, who are most interested in this controversy, to ascend to first principles, is my only apology for insisting upon a point so obvious ; choosing, rather to hazard the contempt of the wise, than not to impress conviction on the vulgar.

With such as admit the possibility of Pædobaptists being saved, there remains, in my apprehension, no alternative, but either to receive them into their communion, without scruple, as comprehended within the apostolic canon, or to affirm that decision to be founded on erroneous grounds ; which at once removes the controversy to a superior tribunal, where they and the Apostle must implead each other. Let us, however, briefly examine certain distinctions they have recourse to, in order to elude the force of these passages. In the first place, it has been alleged, that though we are commanded to *receive* our mistaken brethren, we are not instructed to receive them at the Lord’s table, or into the external communion of the church ; and that such injunctions are consequently irrelevant to the inquiry respecting the right of persons of a similar character, to those external privileges, of which they make no mention. “ Is there no way,” say our opponents, “ of receiving him that is weak in the faith, but by admitting him to the Lord’s table ? Must the exhortation to receive a Christian brother be confined to that single instance of true benevolence ? ” (Booth’s Apol. p. 101.) To this we reply, that we know of none who assert that the term *receive* must necessarily be limited to the single act of a reception at the Lord’s table ; but we affirm, without hesitation, that he is not *received*, in the sense of the Apostle, who is denied that privilege. Had the parties whom he addressed proceeded to an open rupture, in point of communion, would they, in the judgement of our op-

ponents, have complied with the purport and spirit of his injunction? And if, after adopting such a measure, they had appealed to the Apostle, whether there "were no other way of receiving their brethren but by admitting them to the Lord's table," would he, or would he not, have considered himself as mocked and insulted? Mr. Booth enumerates many instances in St. Paul's epistles, in which he enjoins Christians to *receive* certain persons, such as Phœbe, Onesimus, Epaphroditus, and himself, where an admission to the Lord's table was not intended, but something which he informs us would manifest their love in a much higher degree. (Apol. p. 102.) What a convincing demonstration of the propriety of withholding from persons of a similar character, that lower, that inferior token of esteem which is included in Christian fellowship! And because the bare admission of all the persons mentioned, to the external communion of the church did not satisfy the ardent benevolence of the Apostle, without more decided and discriminate marks of attachment, nor answer, in the opinion of our opponents, to the full import of the word *receive*, the true method of realizing his intentions, is to reject the modern Phœbe and Onesimus altogether.

"Supposing, however," says Mr. Booth, "that there were no way of receiving one that is weak in faith, but by admitting him to the Lord's table, this text would be far from proving that which our opponents desire; unless they could make it appear, that the persons of whom the Apostle immediately speaks, were *not members* of the Church of Rome, when he gave the advice." (Apol. p. 82.) If there be any weight in this argument, it must proceed on the supposition, that if the persons, whom the Apostle enjoins the Romans to receive, had not been already members, there is no sufficient ground for believing, notwithstanding the strain of his admonitions, that they would have been admitted. But is it possible to suppose, that he would have recommended a class of persons so earnestly, to the affectionate regards of a Christian society, whom he would not have previously deemed eligible to their communion; or that the primitive discipline was so soon relaxed, as to occasion the continuance in the church, of such, as would have been originally deemed unworthy candidates? Most assuredly, they, who, upon valid grounds, would have been rejected if they had not already been members, were never permitted to boast the protection and patronage of an inspired Apostle, after they became such. In every well-ordered society, the privileges attached to it are forfeited by that conduct in its members, whatever it be, which would have been an effectual obstacle to their admission; and to suppose this maxim reversed in a Christian church, and that an Apostle would caress, protect, and commend

persons, who might justly have been debarred from entering, is an absurdity, which few minds can digest. The necessity of recurring to such suppositions, is itself a sufficient confutation of the system they are brought to defend.

Our opponents still insist upon it, that no conclusion can be drawn from the command, to receive *the weak in faith*, unless it could be shewn, that they were *unbaptized*. But this mode of reasoning, pursued to its consequences, would annihilate all the general axioms of Scripture,* and considering the infinite diversity of human circumstances, render them a most incompetent guide. If the Holy Spirit has been pleased to command us, without exception, to receive *the weak in faith*, and instructed us in the grounds on which this decision proceeded, which is plainly the acceptance of such with God; if the Apostles, acting under his direction, governed the church on the same principles, and suffered no breach of communion to be effected, but on account of a vicious life, or fundamental error, the criminality attached to an opposite course of procedure will be very little extenuated by a circumstantial difference in its objects. Had those, whom the Apostles commanded their converts to tolerate, been *unbaptized*, the inference in favor of Pædobaptists would unquestionably have been more obvious, but not more certain, because nothing can be more evident, than that they urged the duty of toleration on a principle, which, even in the judgement of our opponents, equally applies to the Pædobaptists, which is, that the error in each case is compatible with a state of salvation, and may be held with an upright conscience.

However systems and opinions may fluctuate, truth is eternal; and if these were solid grounds of mutual forbearance and indulgence heretofore, they must still continue such; but if they were not, St. Paul must be acknowledged to have reasoned inconclusively, and all idea of plenary inspiration must be abandoned. As the case stands, the advocates of exclusive communion must either assert, in direct contradiction to his statement, that the compatibility of an error with the state of salvation, and with what comes nearly to the same point, the perfect sincerity of its abettor, is not a sufficient reason for its being tolerated in the church; or consign the Pædobaptists, who die in their sentiments, to eternal destruction. In this dilemma, they are at liberty to adopt which position they please, but from both, it is impossible to escape.

* "But admitting that to be a fact," says Mr. Booth, "of which there is not the least evidence, the conclusion drawn from the passage would not be just, except it were also proved, that the weak in faith were unbaptized, or at least so considered by their stronger brethren, for that is the point in dispute between us."—*Apol.* p. 104.

In order, as it should seem, to perplex the mind of the reader on this part of the subject, our opponents endeavor to confound that interposition of mercy, by which, impenitent sinners are introduced into a state of salvation, with the gracious acceptance of believers.*

With this view we are reminded, that God receives such as are dead in sins. Whether it be safe to assert, that God accepts the impenitent at all, while their impenitence continues, I shall not stay to inquire; it is certain, they are not received in the *same sense* as genuine Christians, nor in the sense the Apostle intended, when he enjoined forbearance towards the *weak in faith*. That Christ receives men *in their sins*, so as to adopt them into his family, and make them heirs of eternal life, is a doctrine offensive to pious ears, most remote from the language of Scripture, and from all sober theology. But if they intend something essentially distinct from this, for what purpose it is introduced, except with a view to shelter themselves under the cover of an ambiguous term, I am at a loss to conjecture. In the mean time, it is obvious, that the design of these contortions is to get rid, if possible, of a principle, which originated not with us, but with St. Paul, that we ought to accept those whom we acknowledge Christ to have accepted. This is still more evident, when we find them adducing the excommunication of unworthy members, such as the incestuous man at Corinth, who, it is asserted, was all along an object of divine favor, as a proof, that the rule which that inspired writer has laid down, may be safely neglected. In reply to which, it is sufficient to ask—In what light was the incestuous person regarded by the Apostle,† when he declared his determination to deliver him to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh? Was it under the character of a member of Christ, or an enemy

* “Yet permit me to ask,” says Mr. Booth, “is the divine conduct, is the favor of God, or the kindness of Christ in receiving sinners, the rule of our proceeding in the administration of positive institutions? Whom does God, whom does Christ receive? None but those who believe and profess faith in the Lord Messiah? Our brethren will not affirm it. For if divine compassion did not extend to the dead in sin; if the kindness of Christ did not relieve the enemies of God, none of our fellow race would ever be saved. But does it hence follow, that we must admit the unbelieving, or the unconverted, either to baptism or the holy supper? Our gracious Lord freely accepts all that desire it, and all that come; but are we bound to receive every one that solicits communion with us?”—*Apol.* p. 106.

† “Besides, gospel churches,” says Mr. Booth, “are sometimes obliged to exclude from their communion those whom he has received, as appears from the case of the incestuous person in the church of Corinth. And have those churches which practise free communion never excluded any for scandalous backslidings, whom, notwithstanding, they could not but consider as received of Christ?”—*Apol.* p. 106.

to the gospel? If we believe his own representation, he deemed it necessary for him to be expelled as an infectious leaven, the continuance of which would corrupt the whole mass; so that whatever proofs of repentance he might afterwards exhibit, these could have no influence on the principle on which he was excluded. When the professors of Christianity are guilty of deliberate violation of the laws of Christ, they are to be treated agreeably to the conduct they exhibit, as bad men, with a hope, that the severity of discipline may reclaim and restore them to the paths of rectitude.

To justify the practice of exclusive communion, by placing Pædobaptists, who form the great body of the faithful, on the same level with men of impure and vicious lives, is equally repugnant to reason, and offensive to charity; at the same time that it is manifest, from this mode of reasoning, that the measure contended for is considered in the light of *punishment*. Whether our Pædobaptist brethren are the proper objects of it, or whether it is adopted to promote the only legitimate ends of punishment, must be left to future inquiry.

SECTION III.

Pædobaptists a part of the true church, and their exclusion on that account unlawful.

Before we proceed to urge the argument announced in this section, it will be necessary to ascertain the precise import of the word *church*, as it is employed in the Holy Scriptures. If we examine the New Testament, we shall find that the term *church*, as a religious appellation, occurs in two senses only; it either denotes the whole body of the faithful, or some one assembly of Christians associated for the worship of God. In the former sense, it is styled in the Apostle's creed, catholic, or universal; a belief in the existence of which, forms one of its principal articles. In this sense, Jesus Christ is affirmed to be "Head over all things to the church, which is his body." It is in this collective view of it, that we affirm its perpetuity. When the term is employed to denote a particular assembly of Christians, it is invariably accompanied with a specification of the place where it was accustomed to convene, as for example, the church at Corinth, at Ephesus, or at Rome. Now it is manifest from Scripture, that these two significations of the word differ from each other only as a part differ from a whole, so that when the whole body of believers is intended, it is used in its absolute form; when a particular society is meant, it is joined with a local specification. It is never used in the New Testament as in modern times, to denote the

aggregate of Christian assemblies throughout a province, or a kingdom; nor do we ever read of the church of Achaia, Galatia, et cætera, but of the *churches*, in the plural number; the word being constantly applied either to the whole number of the faithful, scattered throughout the world, or to some single congregation or society. It is equally obvious, that whenever the word church occurs in its absolute form, it comprehends all genuine Christians without exception, and as that church is affirmed to be *his body*, it could not enter into the conception of the inspired writers that there was a class of persons strictly united to Christ, who yet were none of its component parts.

By orthodox Christians it is uniformly maintained, that union to Christ is formed by faith, and as the Baptists are distinguished by demanding a profession of it at baptism, they, at least, are precluded from asserting that rite to have any concern in effecting the spiritual alliance in question. In their judgement at least, since faith precedes the application of water, the only means of union are possessed by the abettors of infant sprinkling equally with themselves; who are therefore equally of the "body of Christ, and members in particular." But since the Holy Ghost identifies that body with the church, explaining the one by the other, ("for his body's sake, which is the church,") it seems impossible to deny, that they are fully entitled to be considered in the catholic sense of the term, as members of the Christian church. And as the universal church is nothing more than the collective body of the faithful, and differs only from a particular assembly of Christians, as the whole from a part, it is equally impossible to deny that a Pædobaptist society, is, in the more limited import of the word, a true church.

If we consider the matter in a light somewhat different, we shall be conducted to the same conclusion, and be compelled to confess that Pædobaptist societies are, or at least may be, notwithstanding the practice of infant sprinkling, true churches. The idea of plurality, it will be admitted, adds nothing to the nature of the object to which it is attached. The idea of a number of men differs nothing in kind from that of a single man, except that it involves a repetition, or multiplication of the same idea. But the term church is merely a numerical term, denoting a multitude, or an assembly of men; and for the same reason that a number of men meeting together constitutes an assembly, or *church*,* in the most comprehensive import of the word, so a number of Christians convened for the worship of God, constitutes a Christian as-

* "Acts xix. 32—"For the assembly was confused." The original word is ἡ ἐκκλησία, the term usually rendered *church*.

sembly, or a *church*. Such an assembly will necessarily be modified by the character of the members which compose it ; if their sentiments are erroneous, the church will proportionably imbibe a tincture of error ; but to affirm, that, though it consists of real Christians, a society of such assembled for Christian worship is not a true church, is to attribute to the idea of *plurality* or of *number* the power of changing the nature or essence of the object with which it is united, which involves a contradiction to our clearest perceptions. If we adhere to the dictates of reason or of Scripture, when we give the appellation of a church to a particular society of Christians, we shall mingle nothing in our conceptions, beyond what enters into our ideas of an individual Christian, with the exception of this circumstance only, that it denotes a number of such individuals actually assembled, or wont to assemble, for the celebration of divine worship. Though the definition of a church has often been the occasion of much confused disquisition, especially when the term has been applied exclusively to the clergy, the Baptists, I believe, are the only persons who have scrupled to assign that appellation to societies acknowledged to consist of sincere and spiritual worshippers ; a notion, which, however repugnant to the dictates of candor, or of common sense, is the necessary appendage of the practice, equally absurd, of confining their communion to their own denomination.

Having shown, we trust to the satisfaction of the reader, that Pædobaptism is not an error of such magnitude, as to prevent the society which maintains it from being deemed a true church, I proceed to observe, that to repel the members of such a society from communion, is the very essence of schism. Schism is a causeless and unnecessary separation from the church of Christ, or from any part of it ; and that secession cannot urge the plea of necessity, where no concurrence in what is deemed evil, no approbation of error or superstition, is involved in communion. In the case before us, by admitting a Pædobaptist to the Lord's supper, no sanction whatever is given to infant sprinkling, no act of concurrence is involved or implied ; nothing is done, or left undone, which would not have been equally so, if his attendance were withdrawn. Under such circumstances, the necessity of preserving the purity of worship, or of avoiding an active co-operation in what we deem sinful or erroneous, (the only justifiable ground of separation,) has no place. The objection to his admission is founded solely on a disapprobation of a particular practice considered, not as it affects us, since no part of our religious practice is influenced by it, but in relation to its intrinsic demerits.

Division amongst Christians, especially when it proceeds to a breach of communion, is so fraught with scandal, and so utterly

repugnant to the genius of the gospel, that the suffrages of the whole Christian world have concurred in regarding it as an evil, on no occasion to be incurred, but for the avoidance of a greater—the violation of conscience. Whenever it becomes impossible to continue in a religious community, without concurring in practices, and sanctioning abuses, which the word of God condemns, a secession is justified by the apostolic voice; “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” On this principle, the conduct of the Reformers, in separating from the Roman Hierarchy, admits of an ample vindication; in consequence of the introduction of superstitious rites and ceremonies, it became impracticable to continue in her communion, without partaking of her sins; and for a similar reason the Nonconformists seceded from the Church of England, where ceremonies were enforced, and an ecclesiastical polity established, incompatible, as they conceived, with the purity and simplicity of the Christian institute. In each of these cases, the blame of schism did not attach to the separatists, but to that spirit of imposition which rendered such a measure requisite. In each instance it was an act of self-preservation, rendered unavoidable by the highest necessity, that of declining to concur in practices at which their conscience revolted. But what similarity to this is discernible in the conduct of the advocates of strict communion? They are not engaged in preserving their own liberty, but in an attack on the liberty of others; their object is not to preserve the worship in which they join, pure from contamination; but to sit in judgement on the consciences of their brethren, and to deny them the privileges of the visible church on account of a difference of opinion, which is neither imposed on themselves, nor deemed fundamental. They propose to build a church, upon the principle of an absolute exclusion of a multitude of societies, which they must either acknowledge to be true churches, or be convicted, as we have seen, of the greatest absurdity; while, for a conduct so monstrous and unnatural, they are precluded from the plea of necessity, because no attempt is made by Pædobaptists to modify their worship, or to control the most enlarged exercise of private judgement. Upon the principle for which I am contending, they are not called to renounce their peculiar tenets on the subject of baptism, nor to express their approbation of a contrary practice; but simply not to sever themselves from the body of Christ, nor refuse to unite with his church.

However familiar the spectacle of Christian societies, who have no fellowship or intercourse with each other, has become, he who consults the New Testament will instantly perceive, that nothing more repugnant to the dictates of inspiration, or to the practice of

the first and purest age, can be conceived. When we turn our eyes to the primitive times, we behold one church of Christ, and one only, in which, when new assemblies of Christians arose, they were considered, not as multiplying, but diffusing it; not as destroying its unity, or impairing its harmony, but being fitly compacted together on the same foundation, as a mere accession to the beauty and grandeur of the whole. The spouse of Christ, like a prolific mother, exulted in her numerous offspring, who were all equally cherished in her bosom, and grew up at her side. As the necessity of departing from these maxims, or of appearing to depart from them at least, by forming separate societies, arose entirely from that spirit of ecclesiastical tyranny and superstition which was gradually developed, so a similar measure is justifiable, as far as that necessity extends, and no farther. In the case of strict communion, it has no place whatever. In that case, it is not a defensive, but an offensive measure; it is not an assertion of Christian liberty, by resisting encroachment; it is itself a violent encroachment on the freedom of others; not an effort to preserve our own worship pure, but to enforce a conformity to our views, in a point acknowledged not essential to salvation. That the unity of the church cannot be maintained upon those principles, that if every error is to be opposed, not by mild remonstrance, and scriptural argument, but by making it the pretext of a breach of communion, nothing but a series of animosities and divisions can ensue, the experience of past ages has rendered sufficiently evident. If, amidst the infinite diversity of opinions, each society deems it necessary to render its own peculiarities the basis of union, as though the design of Christians, in forming themselves into a church, were not to exhibit the great principles of the gospel, but to give publicity and effect to party distinctions, all hope of restoring Christian harmony and unanimity must be abandoned. When churches are thus constituted, instead of enlarging the sphere of Christian charity, they become so many hostile confederacies.

If it be once admitted, that a body of men, associating for Christian worship, have a right to enact as terms of communion, something more than is included in the terms of salvation, the question suggested by St. Paul—"Is Christ divided?" is utterly futile; what he considered as a solecism is reduced to practice, and established by law. How is it possible to attain or preserve unanimity in the absence of an intelligible standard? And when we feel ourselves at liberty to depart from a divine precedent, and to affect a greater nicety and scrupulosity, in the separation of the precious and the vile, than the Searcher of Hearts; when we follow the guidance of private partialities and predilections, without pre-

tending to regulate our conduct by the pattern of our great Master, who is at a loss to perceive the absolute impossibility of preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace? Of what is essential to salvation, it is not difficult to judge; the quiet of the conscience requires, that the information on this subject should be clear and precise; whatever is beyond, is involved in comparative obscurity, and subject to doubtful disputation.

There are certain propositions, which produce on a mind free from prejudice, such instantaneous conviction, as scarcely to admit of formal proof. Of this nature is the following position, that it is presumptuous to aspire to a greater purity and strictness in selecting the materials of a church, than are observed by its divine founder; and those whom he forms and actuates by his Spirit, and admits to communion with himself, are sufficiently qualified for the communion of mortals. What can be alleged, in contradiction to a truth so indubitable and so obvious? Nothing but a futile distinction (futile in relation to the present subject) betwixt the moral, and the positive parts of Christianity. We are told again and again, that the Lord's supper is a positive and arbitrary institution, in consequence of which, the right to it is not to be judged of by moral considerations, and general reasonings, but by express prescription and command.

Willing to meet objectors on their own ground, we request them to point us to the passage in the code of inspiration, where unbaptized Christians are forbidden to participate; and all the answer we receive, consists merely of those inferences and arguments from analogy, against which they protest, so that our opponents, unsupported by the letter of Scripture, are obliged to have recourse to general reasoning, not less than ourselves, however lame and defective that reasoning may be.

When we urge them with the fact, that all genuine Christians are received by Christ, and that his conduct in this instance is proposed as a pattern for our imitation, they are compelled to shift their ground; and, although it is evident to every one who reflects, that we mean to assert the obligation of adhering to that example, only as far as it is known, they adduce the instance of immoral professors, who, though received, as they contend, by Christ, are justly rejected by the church. But how, we ask are we to ascertain the fact, that such persons are accepted of Christ, till they give proof of their repentance? Is it precisely the same thing, to neglect a known rule of action, as to cease to follow it, when it is involved in hopeless obscurity? Admitting for argument's sake, that disorderly livers have uninterrupted union with the Saviour, it is impossible that we should know it, while they continue impenitent, and therefore, on such occasions, it ceases to be a rule. But

in rejecting Pædobaptists in the mass, they reject a numerous class of Christians, whom they know and acknowledge to be temples of the Holy Ghost. If the two cases are parallel, we acknowledge the justice of the conclusion ; if not, what more futile and absurd ? Let it be remembered, however, that all this quibbling and tergiversation, are employed to get rid of an apostolic canon, and that they bear upon our principles in no other sense, than as they tend to nullify or impair the force of an inspired maxim. If we are in an error, we deem it no small felicity to err in such company.

Before I close this section, I must be permitted to remark an inconsistency in the conduct of our opponents, connected with this part of the subject, which has often excited my surprise. Disclaiming, as they do, all communion with Pædobaptists, and refusing to acknowledge them as a legitimate part of the Christian church, we should naturally expect they would shun every approach to such a recognition of them, with peculiar care, in devotional exercises, in solemn addresses to the Deity. Nothing, on the contrary, is more common, than the interchange of religious services betwixt Baptists and Independents, in which the Pædobaptist minister is solemnly recommended to the Supreme Being, as the pastor of the church, and His blessing earnestly implored on the relation they stand in to each other ; nor is it unusual for a Baptist to officiate at the ordination of an Independent minister, by delivering a charge, or inculcating the duties of the people, in a discourse appropriated to the occasion. They feel no objection to have communion with Pædobaptists in prayer and praise, the most solemn of all acts of worship, even on an occasion immediately connected with the recognition of a religious society ; but no sooner does the idea of the eucharist occur, than it operates like a spell, and all this language is changed, and these sentiments vanish. It is surely amusing, to behold a person solemnly inculcating the reciprocal duties of a relation, which on his principles has no existence ; and interceding expressly in behalf of a pastor and a church, when, if we credit his representations at other times, that church is illegitimate, and the title of pastor consequently a mere usurpation. Although it must be acknowledged, that the approach of Pædobaptists to the sacred table, is, on their principles, a presumptuous intrusion, it is seldom, that the advocates of strict communion feel any scruple in attempting, by devotional exercises, to prepare the mind for the right performance of what they are accustomed to stigmatize as radically wrong. For my part, I am utterly at a loss to reconcile the discrepancies. Is it that they consider less attention to truth, a less exact correspondence betwixt the language and the sentiments, requisite in addressing the Deity, than in discoursing with their fellow mortals ? Or is it not more

candid to suppose, that devotion elevates them to a higher region, where they breathe a freer air, and look down upon the petty subtleties of a thorny, disputatious theology, with a just and sovereign contempt?

SECTION IV.

The exclusion of Pædobaptists, from the Lord's table, considered as a punishment.

The refusal of the eucharist to a professor of Christianity can be justified only on the ground of his supposed criminality; of his embracing heretical sentiments, or living a vicious life. As the sentence of exclusion is the severest the church can inflict, and no punishment just, but in proportion to the degree of preceding delinquency, it follows of course, that he who incurs the total privation of church-privileges, must be considered eminently in the light of an offender. When the incestuous person was separated from the church at Corinth, it was regarded by St. Paul as a *punishment*, and that of no ordinary magnitude:—"Sufficient," said he, "is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." Nor is there any difference, with respect to the present inquiry, betwixt the refusal of a candidate, and the expulsion of a member; since nothing will justify the former of these measures, which might not be equally alleged in vindication of the latter. Both amount to a declaration of the parties being unworthy to communicate. The language held by our opponents is sufficiently decisive on this head:—"It is not every one," says Mr. Booth, "that is received of Jesus Christ, who is entitled to communion at his table; but such, and such only, as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." (Apol., 107.) Hence to be consistent with themselves, they must impute to Pædobaptists universally, a degree of delinquency equal to that which attaches to the most flagrant breaches of immorality; and deem them equally guilty in the sight of God, with those unjust persons, idolators, revellers, and extortioners, who are declared incapable of entering into the kingdom of heaven. For if the guilt imputed in this instance, is acknowledged to be of a totally different order from that which belongs to the openly vicious and profane, how come they to be included in the same sentence; and where is the equity of animadverting upon unequal faults, with equal severity.

To be consistent also, they must invariably refuse to tolerate every species of imperfection in their members, which in their judgement is equally criminal with the Pædobaptist error; but how far they are from maintaining this impartiality, is too obvious to admit of a question. In churches whose discipline is the most rigid, it

will not be denied that many are tolerated, who are chargeable with conduct more offensive in the sight of God, than a misconception of the nature of a positive institute; nor will they assert that a Brainerd, a Doddridge, or a Leighton, had more to answer for at the supreme tribunal, on the score of infant-baptism, than the most doubtful of those imperfect Christians, whom they retain without scruple in their communion. Let them remember too, that this reasoning proceeds not on the principle of the innocence of error in general, or of infant sprinkling in particular; but on the contrary, that it takes for granted, that some degree of blame attaches to a neglect, though involuntary, of a positive precept; we wish only to be informed, on what principle of equity it is proposed, in the infliction of ecclesiastical censures, to equalize things which are not equal.

From those injunctions of St. Paul which have already been distinctly noticed, where he enforces the duty of reciprocal toleration, we find him insisting on certain circumstances, adapted to diminish the moral estimate of the errors in question, and to shew that they involved a very inconsiderable portion of blame, compared to that which the zealots, on either side, were disposed to impute. Such is the statement of their not being fundamental, of the possibility of their being held with a pure conscience, and the certainty that both parties were equally comprehended within the terms of salvation. In thus attempting to form an estimate of the magnitude of the mistakes and misconceptions of our fellow Christians in a moral view, for the purpose of regulating our treatment of them, we are justified by the highest authority; and the only rational inquiry seems to be, whether infant-baptism is really more criminal than those acknowledged imperfections, which are allowed to be proper objects of Christian forbearance. If it be affirmed that it is, we request our opponents to reconcile this assertion with the high encomiums they are wont to bestow on Pædobaptists, many of whom they feel no hesitation in classing, on other occasions, with the most eminent saints upon earth. That they are perfectly exempt from blame, we are not contending; but this strange combination of vice and virtue in the same persons, by which they are at once justly excluded from the church as *criminal*, and extolled as saints, is perfectly incomprehensible. The advocates of this doctrine attempt to conceal its deformity, by employing an attenuated and ambiguous phraseology, and instead of speaking of Pædobaptists in the terms their system demands, are fond of applying the epithets, irregular, disorderly, &c. to their conduct. Still the question returns—Is this imputed irregularity, innocent, or criminal? If the former, why punish it at all? If the latter, surely the punishment should be proportioned to the

guilt ; and if it exceed the measure awarded to offences equally aggravated, we must either pronounce it unjust, or confound the distinction of right and wrong. But if the forfeiture of all the privileges attached to Christian society, is incurred merely by infant-baptism, while numerous imperfections both in sentiment and practice are tolerated in the same church, it cannot be denied, that the former is treated with more severity than the latter. If it be more criminal, such treatment is just : but if a Doddridge and a Leighton were not, even in the judgement of our opponents, necessarily more criminal in the sight of God, than the most imperfect of those whom they retain in their communion, it is neither just in itself, nor upon their own principles.

If we consider the matter in another light, the measure under consideration will appear equally incapable of vindication. As it is unquestionably of the nature of *punishment*, so the infliction of every species of punishment is out of place, which has no tendency to reform the offender, or to benefit others by his example ; which are its only legitimate ends. Whatever is beside these purposes, is a useless waste of suffering, equally condemned by the dictates of reason and religion. The application of this principle to the case before us, is extremely obvious.

I am far from thinking lightly of the spiritual power with which Christ has armed his church. It is a high and mysterious one, which has no parallel on earth. Nothing, in the order of means, is equally adapted to awaken compunction in the guilty, with spiritual censures impartially administered ; the sentence of excommunication in particular, harmonizing with the dictates of conscience, and re-echoed by her voice, is truly terrible ; it is the voice of God, speaking through its legitimate organ, which he who despises, or neglects, ranks with "heathen-men and publicans," joins the synagogue of Satan, and takes his lot with an unbelieving world, doomed to perdition. Excommunication is a sword which, strong in its apparent weakness, and the sharper, and more efficacious for being divested of all sensible and exterior envelopements, lights immediately on the spirit, and inflicts a wound which no balm can cure, no ointment can molify, but which must continue to ulcerate and burn, till healed by the blood of atonement, applied by penitence and prayer. In no instance is that axiom more fully verified, "The weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men," than in the discipline of his church. By incumbering it with foreign aid, they have robbed it of its real strength ; by calling in the aid of temporal pains and penalties, they have removed it from the spirit to the flesh, from its contact with eternity, to unite it to secular interests ; and as the corruption of the best things, is the worst, have rendered it the scandal and reproach of our holy religion.

While it retains its character, as a spiritual ordinance, it is the chief bulwark against the disorders which threaten to overturn religion, the very nerve of virtue, and next to the preaching of the cross, the principal antidote to the "corruptions that are in the world through lust." Discipline in a church, occupies the place of laws in a state; and as a kingdom, however excellent its constitution, will inevitably sink into a state of extreme wretchedness, in which laws are either not enacted, or not duly administered; so a church which pays no attention to discipline, will either fall into confusion, or into a state so much worse, that little or nothing will remain worth regulating. The right of inflicting censures, and of proceeding in extreme cases to excommunication, is an essential branch of that power, with which the church is endowed, and bears the same relation to discipline, that the administration of criminal justice bears to the general principles of government. When this right is exerted in upholding the "faith once delivered to the saints," or enforcing a conscientious regard to the laws of Christ, it maintains its proper place, and is highly beneficial. Its cognizance of doctrine is justified by apostolic authority; "a heretic after two or three admonitions reject;" nor is it to any purpose to urge the difference betwixt ancient heretics and modern, or that to pretend to distinguish truth from error is a practical assumption of infallibility. While the truth of the gospel remains, a fundamental contradiction to it is possible, and the difficulty of determining what is so, must be exactly proportioned to the difficulty of ascertaining the import of revelation, which he who affirms to be insurmountable, ascribes to it such an obscurity as must defeat its primary purpose.

He who contends, that no agreement in doctrine is essential to communion, must, if he understand himself, either mean to assert that Christianity contains no fundamental truths, or that it is not necessary that a member of a church should be a Christian. The first of these positions sets aside the necessity of faith altogether; the last is a contradiction in terms. For these reasons, it is required that the operation of discipline should extend to speculative errors, no less than to practical enormities. But since it is not pretended that Pædobaptists are heretics, it is evident that they are not subject to the cognizance of the church, under that character. As they differ from us merely in the interpretation of a particular precept, while they avow the same deference to the legislature; the proper antidote to their error is calm, dispassionate argument, not the exercise of power. Let us present the evidence on which our practice is grounded, to the greatest advantage, to which the display of a conciliating spirit will contribute more than a little; but to proceed with a high hand, and attempt

to terminate the dispute by authority, involves an utter misconception of the true nature and object of discipline, which is never to decide what is doubtful, or to elucidate what is obscure, but to promulgate the sentence which the immutable laws of Christ have provided, with the design in the first place, of exciting compunction in the breast of the offender, and next, of profiting others by his example. The solemn decision of a Christian assembly, that an individual has forfeited his right to spiritual privileges, and is henceforth consigned to the kingdom of Satan, is an awful proceeding, only inferior in terror to the sentence of the last day.

But what is it which renders it so formidable? It is its accordance with the moral nature of man, its harmony with the dictates of conscience, which gives it all its force. When, on the contrary, the pious inquirer is satisfied with his own conduct, viewing it with approbation and complacency; when he is fortified, as in the present instance, by the example of a great majority of the Christian world, who are ready to receive him with open arms, and to applaud him for the very practice which has provoked it, how vain is it to expect, that his exclusion from a particular church, will operate a change? When he learns too, that his supposed error is not pretended to be fatal, but such as may be held with a good conscience, and with faith unfeigned, and is actually held by some of the best of men, it is easy to foresee what sentiments he will feel towards the authors of such a measure, and how little he will be prepared to examine impartially the evidence of that particular opinion, which has occasioned it. Such a proceeding, not having the remotest tendency to inform, or to alarm the conscience, is ineffectual to every purpose of discipline; and as it professedly comprises nothing of the nature of argument, no light can be derived from it, towards the elucidation of a controverted question. It interposes by authority, instead of reason, where authority can avail nothing, and reason is all in all; and while it is contemptible as an instrument employed to compel unanimity, its power of exciting prejudice and disgust is unrivalled. Such are the mischiefs resulting from confounding together the provinces of discipline and of argument? and since the practice which we have ventured to oppose, if it have any meaning, is intended to operate as a punishment, without answering one of the ends for which it is inflicted, it is high time it were consigned to oblivion.

There is another consideration sufficiently related to the part of the subject before us, to justify my introducing it here, as I would wish to avoid the unnecessary multiplication of divisions. Whatever criminality attaches to the practice of free communion, must entirely consist in *sanctioning* the improper conduct of the parties with whom we unite; and if it be wrong to join with Pædobaptists

at the Lord's table, it must be still more so in them to celebrate it. When an action allowed in itself to be innocent or commendable, becomes improper, as performed in conjunction with another, that impropriety must result solely from the moral incompetence to that action, of the party associated. Thus in the instance before us, it must be assumed, that Pædobaptists are *morally culpable*, in approaching the sacred symbols, or the attempt to criminate us for *sanctioning* them in that practice, would be ridiculous. As it is allowed that every baptized believer not only may partake, but ought to partake, of that spiritual repast, his uniting with Pædobaptists on that occasion, is liable to objection on no other ground, than that it may be considered as intimating his approbation of *their* conduct in that particular. Upon the principles of our opponents, their approach is not only sinful, but sinful to such a degree, as to communicate a moral taint to what, in other circumstances, would be deemed an act of obedience. Here the first question that arises, is ; Are the advocates of infant-baptism criminal in approaching the Lord's table ?

Be it remembered, that our controversy with them respects the ordinance of baptism only, which we suppose them to have misconceived, and that it has no relation to the only remaining positive institute. Believing, as many of them unquestionably do, that they are as truly baptized as ourselves, and there being no controversy betwixt us on the subject of the eucharist, it is impossible for them, even on the principles of our opponents, to entertain the least scruple respecting the obligation of attending to that ordinance. Admitting it possible for them to believe, what they uniformly and invariably profess, they cannot fail of being fully convinced, that it is their duty to communicate. Under these circumstances, ought they to communicate, or ought they not ? If we answer in the negative, we must affirm, that men ought not to pursue that course, which, after the most mature deliberation, the unhesitating dictates of conscience suggest ; which would go to obliterate and annul the only immediate rule of human action. Nor can it be objected with truth, that the tendency of this reasoning is to destroy the absolute difference betwixt right and wrong, by referring all to conscience. That, apart from human judgements, there is an intrinsic, moral difference in actions, we freely admit, and hence results the previous obligation of informing the mind, by a diligent attention to the dictates of reason and religion, and of delaying to act till we have sufficient light ; but in entire consistence with this, we affirm, that where there is no hesitation, the criterion of *immediate* duty is the suggestion of conscience ; whatever guilt may have been previously incurred, by the neglect of serious and impartial inquiry. That this, under the

modifications already specified, is the only criterion, is sufficiently evident, from the impossibility of conceiving any other. If it lead (as it easily may, from the neglect of the previous inquiry already mentioned) to a deviation from absolute rectitude, we must not concur in the action in which such deviation is involved.

To apply these principles to the case before us. Whatever blame we may be disposed to attribute to the abettors of infant-baptism, on the score of previous inattention, or prejudice, as there is nothing in their principles to cause them to hesitate respecting the obligation of the eucharist, it is unquestionably their *immediate* duty to celebrate it, and they would be guilty of a deliberate and wilful offence, were they to neglect it. And as it is *their* duty to act thus, in compliance with the dictates of conscience, we cannot be guilty of sanctioning what is evil in them, by the approbation implied in joint participation. As far as *they* are concerned, the case seems clear; and no sanction is given to criminal conduct. It remains to be considered only, how the action is situated with respect to ourselves; and here the decision is still more easy, for the action to which we are invited, is not only consistent with rectitude, but would be allowed by all parties, to be an instance of obedience, but for the concurrence of Pædobaptists. Thus much may suffice in answer to the first question, respecting the supposed criminality of the act of communion, as performed by the advocates of infant-baptism; a criminality, which must be assumed as the sole basis of the charges adduced against the practice we are defending.

When we reflect, that the whole of our opponents' reasoning turns upon the disqualification of Pædobaptists for the Lord's supper, it is surprising, that we rarely, if ever, find them contemplate the subject in that light, or advert to the criminality of breaking down that sacred inclosure. The subordinate agents are severely censured, the principal offenders scarcely noticed; and if my reader be disposed to gratify his curiosity, by making a collection of all the uncandid strictures which have been passed upon the advocates of Pædobaptism, it is more than probable, the charge of profaning the Lord's supper, would not be found among the number. Yet this is the *original* sin; this the epidemic evil, as widely diffused as the existence of Pædobaptist communities; and if it be of such a nature, as to attach a portion of guilt to whatever comes into contact with it; it must, considering its extensive prevalence, be one of the most crying enormities. It is an evil, which has spread much wider than the sacrifice of the mass; it is a pollution which (with the exception of one sect only,) attaches to all flesh, and is unblushingly avowed by the professors of Christianity, in every part of the universe. And what is most surpris-

ing, the only persons who have discovered it, instead of lifting up their voice, maintain a profound silence ; and while they are sufficiently liberal in their censures, on the popular error respecting baptism, are not heard to breathe a murmur against this erroneous abuse. In truth, they are so little impressed with it, that they decline urging it even where the mention of it would seem unavoidable. When they are rebuking us for joining with our Pædobaptist brethren in partaking of a sacrament for which they are supposed to want the due qualifications, it is not *their* presumption in approaching, on which they insist, as might be reasonably expected ; on that subject they are silent, while they vehemently inveigh against the imaginary countenance we afford, to the neglect of baptism. Thus they persist in construing our conduct, not into an approval of that act of communion in which we are engaged, but into a tacit admission of the validity of infant baptism, against which we are known to remonstrate. In short, they are disposed to attack our practice in any point, rather than in that in which, if we are wrong, it is alone vulnerable, that of its being an expression of our approbation of Pædobaptists celebrating the eucharist. In the same spirit, when they have once procured the exclusion of the obnoxious party from their assemblies, they are completely satisfied ; their communion elsewhere gives them no concern, though it must be allowed, on the supposition of the pretended disqualification, that the evil remains in its full force. Nor are they ever known to remonstrate with them on this irregularity, during its continuance ; nor, should they afterwards become converts to our doctrine, to recal it to their attention, with a view to excite compunction and remorse ; so that this is perhaps the only sin for which men are never called to repentance, and of which no man has been known to repent. When our Lord dismissed the woman taken in adultery, though he did not proceed to judge her, he solemnly charged her to *sin no more* : the advocates for strict communion, when they dismiss Pædobaptists, give them no such charge ; their language seems to be, “Go, sin by yourselves, and we are satisfied.”

The inference I would deduce from these remarkable facts is, that they possess an internal conviction, that the class of Christians whom they proscribe, would be guilty of a great impropriety, in declining to communicate in the sacramental elements ; and that the union of Baptists with them in that solemnity, so far from being liable to the imputation of “partaking in other men’s sins,” is not only lawful, but commendable.

SECTION V.

On the impossibility of reducing the practice of strict communion to any general principle.

WHEN a particular branch of conduct is so circumstanced, as to be incapable of being deduced from some general rule, or of being resolved into some comprehensive principle, founded on reason, or revelation, we may be perfectly assured, it is not obligatory. Whatever is matter of duty, is a part of some *whole*, the relation to which is susceptible of proof, either by the express decision of Scripture, or by general reasoning; and a point of practice perfectly insulated, and disjointed from the general system of duties, whatever support it may derive from prejudice, custom or caprice, can never be satisfactorily vindicated. From want of attention to this axiom, both the world and the church have in different periods, been overrun with innumerable forms of superstition and folly; to which the only effectual antidote is, an appeal to principles. Unless I am much mistaken, the question under discussion will afford a striking exemplification of the justness of this remark. If it be found impossible to fix a medium betwixt the toleration of all opinions in religion, and the restriction of it, to errors *not fundamental*, the practice of exclusive communion must be abandoned, because it is neither more nor less than an attempt to establish such a medium. By errors *not fundamental*, I mean such as are admitted to consist with a state of grace and salvation; such as are not supposed to prevent their abettors from being accepted of God. With such as contend for the indiscriminate admission of all doctrines on the one hand, or with the abettors of rigid uniformity, who allow no latitude of sentiment on the other, we have no concern; since we concur with our opponents in deprecating both these extremes; and while we are tenacious of the "truth as it is in Jesus," we both admit that some indulgence to the mistakes and imperfections of the truly pious is due, from a regard to the dictates of inspiration and the nature of man. The only subject of controversy is, how far that forbearance is to be extended; we assert, to every diversity of judgement, not incompatible with salvation; they contend that a difference of opinion on baptism is an excepted case. If the word of God had clearly and unequivocally made this exception, we should feel ourselves bound to admit it, upon the same principle on which we maintain the infallible certainty of revelation; but when we press for this decision, and request to be directed to the part of Scripture which for ever prohibits unbaptized persons from approaching the sacrament, in the same manner as the Jews were prohibited from cele-

brating the passover, who had not submitted to circumcision, we meet with no reply but precarious inferences, and general reasoning.

However plausible their mode of arguing may appear, the impartial reader will easily perceive it fails in the main point ; which is, to establish that *specific difference* betwixt the case they except out of their list of tolerated errors, and those which they admit, which shall justify this opposite treatment. Thus when they ask whether God has not "commanded baptism ; whether it is not the believer's duty to be found in it ;" (Booth's Apol. p. 128.) it is manifest that the same reasons might be urged against bearing with any imperfection in our fellow Christian whatever ; for which of these, we ask, is not inconsistent with some command, and a violation, in a greater or less degree, of some duty ; with this difference indeed, that many of the imperfections which Christian churches are necessitated to bear with, are seated in the will, while the case before us involves merely an unintentional mistake. "It is not every one," says Mr. Booth, "that is received of Jesus Christ, who is entitled to communion at his table ; but such, and only such, as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house." This is the most formal attempt which that writer has made to specify the difference betwixt the case of the abettors of infant baptism, and others ; for which reason, the reader will excuse my directing his attention to it for a few moments. We are indebted to him, in the first place, for a new discovery in theology ; we should not have suspected, but for his assertion, that there could be a description of persons whom Christ has received, who neither revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, nor obey his laws. How Mr. Booth acquired this information we know not ; but certainly in our Saviour's time it was otherwise. "Then are ye my disciples," said he, "if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." I congratulate the public on the prudence evinced by the venerable author, in not publishing the names of these highly privileged individuals, who have proved their title to heaven, to his satisfaction, without reverence, submission, or obedience ; wishing his example had been imitated in this particular by the authors of the wonderful conversions of malefactors, many of whom I fear belong to this new sect.

This singular description, however, I scarcely need remind the reader, is designed to characterize Baptists in opposition to Pædobaptists ; and were it not the production of a man whom I highly revere, I should comment upon it with the severity it deserves. Suffice it to remark, that to mistake the meaning of a statute, is one thing, not to reverence the legislator, another ; that he cannot submit with a good conscience to an ordinance, who is not ap-

prised of its existence ; and that a blind obedience, even to divine laws, would be far from constituting a reasonable service. Every conscientious adherent to infant baptism reveres the authority of Christ, not less than a Baptist, and is distinguished by a spirit of submission and obedience to every known part of his will ; and as this is all to which a Baptist can pretend, and far more than many, who without scruple are tolerated in our churches, can boast, we are as far as ever from ascertaining the *specific difference* betwixt the case of the Pædobaptist, and other instances of error supposed to be entitled to indulgence. In spite of Mr. Booth's marvellous definition, reverence, submission and obedience, are such essential features in the character of a Christian, that he who was judged to be destitute of them, in their substance and reality, would instantly forfeit that character ; while to possess them in perfection, is among the brightest acquisitions of eternity. It should be remembered too, that the general principles of morality are not less the laws of Christ, than positive rites, and if we credit Prophets and Apostles, much to be preferred in comparison ; so that it must be acknowledged, that he who is deficient in attention to these, while he is more exemplary in discharging the former than a baptized Christian, (a very frequent case,) stands higher in the scale of obedience. So equivocal is the line of separation here attempted.

When the necessity of tolerating imperfection is once admitted, there remains no point at which it can consistently stop, till it is extended to every gradation of error, the habitual maintenance of which is compatible with a state of salvation. The reason is, that it is absolutely impossible to define that *species* of error, so situated as not to preclude its possessor from divine acceptance, although it forfeits his title to the full exercise of Christian charity. The Baptists who contend for confining the Lord's supper to themselves, imagine they have found such an error in the practice of initiating infants into the Christian church. But it is observable that they can reduce it to no *class*, nor define it by any *general idea* ; and when we urge them with the apostolic injunction, to bear with each other's infirmities, they have nothing to reply, but merely that St. Paul is not speaking of baptism, which is true, because one thing is not another ; but it behoves them to shew that the principle he establishes does not *include* this case, and here they are silent.

If we impartially examine the reasons on which we rest the toleration of any supposed error, we shall find they invariably coincide with the idea of its *not being fundamental*. If it be alleged, for example, that the error in question relates to a subject less clearly revealed than some others, what is this but to insinuate

the ease with which an honest inquirer may mistake respecting it? If the little practical influence it is likely to exert, is alleged as a plea for forbearance, the force of such a remark rests entirely on the assumption of an indissoluble connexion betwixt a state of salvation, and a certain character, which the opinion in question is supposed not to destroy. If we allege the example of eminently pious men, who have embraced it, we infer from analogy the actual safety of the person by whom it is held; and in short, it is impossible to construct an argument for the exercise of mutual forbearance, but what proceeds upon this principle; a principle which pervades the reasoning of our opponents on every other occasion, except this of strict communion, which they make an insulated case, capriciously exempting it from the arbitration of all the general rules of Scripture, as well as from the maxims to which, in all other instances, they are attached.

Reluctant as I feel to trespass on the patience of the reader, by unnecessarily prolonging the discussion, I am anxious, if possible, to set the present argument in a still stronger light. I observe, therefore, that if it be contended that a certain opinion is so obnoxious as to justify the exclusion of its abettor from the privilege of Christian fellowship, it must be either on account of its involving a contradiction to the saving truth of the gospel, or on account of its injurious effects on the character. As those of our brethren to whom this reasoning is addressed, positively disclaim considering infant baptism in the former light, they will not attempt to vindicate the exclusion of Pædobaptists on that ground. In vindication of such a measure, they must allege the injurious effects it produces on the character of its abettors. Here, however, they have precluded themselves from the possibility of urging that the injury sustained is *fatal*, by the previous concession, that it does not involve a contradiction to saving truth. Could they, without cancelling that concession, urge the *fatal* nature of the influence in question, they would present an object to the mind sufficiently precise and determinate; an object which may be easily conceived, and accurately defined. But as things are now situated, they can at most only insist on such a kind and degree of deteriorating effect as is consistent with the spiritual safety of the party concerned; and as they are among the first to contend that every species of error is productive of injurious effects, it is incumbent upon them to point out some consequences worse in their kind, or more aggravated in degree, resulting from this particular *error*, than what may be fairly ascribed to the worst of those erroneous or defective views, which they are accustomed to tolerate. These injurious consequences must also occupy an intermediate place between two extremes; they must on the one hand be decidedly more serious

than can be supposed to result from the most crude, undigested, or discordant views, tolerated in regular Baptist churches, yet not of such a nature on the other, as to involve the danger of eternal perdition. Let them specify, if it be in their power, that ill influence on the character, which is the natural consequence of the tenet of infant sprinkling, considered *per se*, or independent of adventitious circumstances, and the operation of accidental causes, which justifies a treatment of its patrons, so different from what is given to the abettors of other errors. This malignant influence must, I repeat it, be the natural or necessary product of the practice of Pædobaptism ; because the simple avowal of this is deemed sufficient to incur the forfeiture of church privileges, without further time or inquiry. However vehemently the supporters of such a measure may declaim against it, or however triumphantly expose the principles on which it is founded, they have done nothing towards accomplishing their object, the vindication of strict communion ; since the same mode of proceeding might be adopted towards any other misconception, or erroneous opinion ; and if it may be forcibly expelled, as soon as it is confuted, there is an end to toleration. Toleration has no place, but in the presence of acknowledged imperfection. It is absolutely necessary for them, as they would vindicate their conduct to the satisfaction of reasonable men, to prove, that some specific deteriorating effect results from the practice of infant baptism, distinct from the malignant influence of error in general, and of those imperfections in particular, which are not inconsistent with salvation.

Though the opposition betwixt truth and error is equal in all cases ; and the former always susceptible of proof, as well as the latter of confutation ; all error is not opposed to the *same* truths ; and hence arises a distinction betwixt such erroneous and imperfect views of religion, as, however they may, in their remoter consequences, impair, do not contradict the gospel testimony, and such as do. We lay this distinction, as the basis of that forbearance towards the mistakes and imperfections of good men, for which we plead ; and as the case of our Pædobaptist brethren is clearly comprehended within that distinction, feel no scruple in admitting them to Christian fellowship. We are attached to that distinction, because it is both scriptural and intelligible ; while the hypothesis of the strict Baptists, as they style themselves, is so replete with perplexity and confusion, that for my part, I absolutely despair of comprehending it. It proceeds upon the supposition of a certain medium between two extremes, which they have not even attempted to fix ; and as the necessary consequence of this, their reasoning, if we choose to term it such, floats and undulates in such a manner, that it is extremely difficult to grasp

it. On the pernicious influence of error in general, we entertain no doubt; but we demand again and again, to have that precise injurious effect of infant sprinkling pointed out and evinced, which is more to be deprecated, than the probable result of those acknowledged imperfections to which they extend their indulgence. This must surely be deemed a reasonable requisition, though it is one with which they have not hitherto thought fit to comply.

The operation of speculative error on the mind is one of the profoundest secrets in nature, and to determine the precise quantity of evil resulting from it in any given case, (except the single one of its involving a denial of fundamental truth) transcends the capacity of human nature. We must, in order to form a correct judgement, be not only perfectly acquainted with the nature and tendency of the error in question, but also with the portion of attention it occupies, as well as the degree of zeal and attachment with which it is embraced. We must determine the force of the counteracting principles, and how far it bears an affinity to the predominant failings of him who maintains it, how far it coalesces with the weaker parts of his moral constitution. These particulars, however, it is next to impossible to explore, when the inquiry respects ourselves; how much more to establish a scale which shall mark by just gradations, the malignant influence of erroneous conceptions on others. On the supposition of a formal denial of saving, essential truth, we feel no difficulty; we may determine, without hesitation, on the testimony of God, that it incurs a forfeiture of the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant, among which the communion of saints holds a distinguished place. But such a supposition is foreign to the present inquiry.

Instead of losing ourselves in a labyrinth of metaphysical subtleties, our only safe guide is an appeal to facts; and here we find from experience, that the sentiments of the Pædobaptist may consist with the highest attainments of piety, exhibited in modern times, with the most varied and elevated forms of moral grandeur, without impairing the zeal of missionaries, without impeding the march of confessors to their prisons, or of martyrs to the flames. We are willing to acknowledge, these tenets have produced much mischief in communities and nations, who have confounded baptism with regeneration; but the mere belief of the title of infants to that ordinance, is a misconception respecting a positive institute, much less injurious, than if it affected the vital parts of Christianity. But be it what it may, we contend, that it is impossible, without a total disregard to truth and decency, to assert, that it is *intrinsically* and *essentially* more pernicious in its effects, than the numerous errors and imperfections, which the advocates of strict communion feel no scruple in tolerating, in the best organized

churches. It is but justice to add, that few or none have attempted to prove that it is so ; but have satisfied themselves with a certain vague and loose declamation, better adapted to inflame prejudice, than to produce light or conviction.

In the government of the church, there is a choice of three modes of procedure, each consistent with itself, though not equally compatible with the dictates of reason or Scripture. We may either open the doors to persons of all sentiments and persuasions, who maintain the Messiahship of Christ ; or insist upon an absolute uniformity of belief ; or limit the necessity of agreement to articles deemed fundamental, leaving subordinate points to the exercise of private judgement. The strict Baptists have feigned to themselves a fourth, of which it is not less difficult to form a clear and consistent conception, than of a fourth dimension. They have pursued the clue by which other inquirers have been conducted, till they arrived at a certain point, when they refused to proceed a step further, without being able to assign a single reason for stopping, which would not equally prove they had already proceeded too far. They have attempted an incongruous mixture of liberal principles, with a particular act of intolerance ; and these, like the iron and clay in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, will not mix. Hence, all that want of coherence and system in their mode of reasoning, which might be expected in a defence, not of a theory, so properly, as of a capricious sally of prejudice.

Before I close this part of the subject, I must just remark the sensible chagrin, which the venerable Booth betrays, at our insisting on the distinction betwixt fundamentals and non-fundamentals in religion, and the singular manner in which he attempts to evade its force. After observing, that we are wont, in defence of our practice, to plead that the points at issue are not fundamental—"Not fundamental," he indignantly exclaims, "not essential ! But in what sense is submission to baptism not essential ? To our justifying righteousness, our acceptance with God, or our interest in his favour ? So is the Lord's supper, and so is *every part of our obedience*. They (the friends of open communion) will readily allow, that an interest in the divine favor is not obtained by miserable sinners, but granted by the eternal Sovereign ; and that acceptance with the High and Holy God is not on conditions performed by us, but in consideration of the vicarious obedience, and propitiatory sufferings of the great Emanuel."

"To the pure, all things are pure." In the mind of Mr. Booth, nothing was associated with this language, I am persuaded, but impressions of piety and devotion ; though its unguarded texture and ambiguous tendency are too manifest. For my own part, I am at a loss to put any other construction upon it than this ; either

that faith and repentance are in no respect conditions of salvation, or that adult baptism is of equal necessity and importance. When it is asked—What is essential to salvation, the gospel-constitution is pre-supposed, the great facts in Christianity assumed; and the true import of the inquiry is—What is essential to a personal interest in the blessings secured by the former, in the felicity of which the latter are the basis? in which light, to reply—The atonement and righteousness of Christ, is egregious trifling, because, being things *out of ourselves*, though the only preliminary basis of human hope, it is absurd to confound them with the characteristic difference betwixt such as are saved, and such as perish. When in like manner an inquiry arises—What is fundamental in religion, as we must be supposed by religion to intend a system of doctrines to be believed, and of duties to be performed, to direct us to the vicarious obedience of Christ, not as necessary object of belief, but as a transaction absolute and complete in itself, and to pass over in silence the inherent distinction of character, the faith with its renovating influence to which the promise of life is attached, is, to speak in the mildest terms, to reply in a manner quite irrelevant; and when to this is joined, even by implication, a denial of the existence of such a distinction, we are conducted to the brink of a precipice. The denial of this is the very core of Antinomianism, to which it is painful to see so able a writer, and so excellent a man as Mr. Booth, make the slightest approach. We would seriously ask, whether it be intended to deny, that the belief of any doctrines, or the infusion of any principles or dispositions whatever, is essential to future happiness? If this be intended, it supersedes the use and necessity of every branch of internal religion. If it is not, we ask, Are correct views on the subject of baptism to be classed among those doctrines?

Had we been contending for an indulgence towards such as are convinced of the obligation of believers' baptism, but refuse to act up to their convictions, and shrink from the cross, some parts of the expostulation we have quoted, might be considered as pertinent; but to attempt to explain away a distinction, the most important in theology, the only centre of harmony, the only basis of peace and concord, and the grand bulwark opposed to the sophistry of the Church of Rome, is a humiliating instance of the temerity and imprudence incident to the best of men. The Jesuit Twiss, in that controversy with the Protestants, which gave occasion to the inimitable defence of their principles by the immortal Chillingworth, betrayed the same impatience with our author at this distinction; though in perfect consistence with the doctrines of a church, which pretends, by an appeal to an infallible tribunal, to decide every controversy, and to preclude every doubt.

Nothing but an absolute despair of giving a satisfactory reply to the arguments drawn from this quarter, could have tempted Mr. Booth to quarrel with a distinction so justly dear to all Protestants; and it is no small presumption of the justness of our sentiments, that the attempt to refute them is found to require the subversion of the most received axioms in theology, together with the strange paradox, that while much more than we suppose is necessary to communion, nothing is essential to salvation. In consideration, however, of the embarrassment of our opponents, we feel it easy to overlook the effusions of their discontent; but as it is not usual to consult the enemy on the choice of weapons, we shall continue to employ such as we find most efficacious, though they may not be the most pleasant to the touch.

SECTION VI.

The impolicy of the practice of strict communion considered.

IN the affairs of religion and morality, where a divine authority is interposed, the first and chief attention is due to its dictates, which we are not permitted to violate in the least instance, though we proposed by such violation to promote the interests of religion itself. She scorns to be indebted even for conquest, to a foreign force; the weapons of her warfare are not carnal. We have on this account carefully abstained from urging the imprudence of the measure we have ventured to oppose, from an apprehension that we might be suspected of attempting to bias the suffrage of our readers, by considerations and motives disproportioned to the majesty of revealed truth. But having, as I trust, sufficiently shown that the practice of strict communion derives no support from that quarter, the way is open for the introduction of a few remarks on the natural tendency and effect of the two opposite systems. I would just premise, that I hope no offence will be given to Pædobaptists by denominating their sentiments on the subject of baptism *erroneous*, as though it were expected that our assertion should be accepted for proof. It is designed as a simple statement of my opinion; and is assumed as the basis of my reasoning with my stricter brethren.

Truth and error, as they are essentially opposite in their nature, so the causes to which they are indebted for their perpetuity and triumph, are not less so. Whatever retards a spirit of inquiry, is favorable to error; whatever promotes it, to truth. But nothing, it will be acknowledged, has a greater tendency to obstruct the exercise of free inquiry, than the spirit and feeling of a party. Let a doctrine, however erroneous, become a party distinction,

and it is at once intrenched in interests and attachments, which make it extremely difficult for the most powerful artillery of reason to dislodge it. It becomes a point of honor in the leaders of such parties, which is from thence communicated to their followers, to defend and support their respective peculiarities to the last; and as a natural consequence, to shut their ears against all the pleas and remonstrances by which they are assailed. Even the wisest and best of men are seldom aware how much they are susceptible of this sort of influence; and while the offer of a world would be insufficient to engage them to recant a known truth, or to subscribe an acknowledged error, they are often retained in a willing captivity to prejudices and opinions, which have no other support, and which, if they could lose sight of party feelings, they would almost instantly abandon. To what other cause can we ascribe the attachment of Fenelon and of Pascal, men of exalted genius, and undoubted piety, to the doctrine of transubstantiation, and other innumerable absurdities of the Church of Rome? It is this alone which has ensured a sort of immortality to those hideous productions of the human mind, the shapeless abortions of night and darkness, which reason, left to itself, would have crushed in the moment of their birth.

It is observable, that scientific truths make their way in the world, with much more ease and rapidity than religious. No sooner is a philosophical opinion promulgated, than it undergoes at first a severe and rigorous scrutiny; and if it is found to coincide with the results of experiment, it is speedily adopted, and quietly takes its place among the improvements of the age. Every acquisition of this kind is considered as a common property; as an accession to the general stores of mental opulence. Thus the knowledge of nature, the further it advances from its head, not only enlarges its channel by the accession of tributary streams, but gradually purifies itself from the mixture of error. If we search for the reason of the facility, with which scientific improvements establish themselves in preference to religious, we shall find it in the absence of combination, in there being no class of men closely united, who have an interest, real or imaginary, in obstructing their progress. We hear, it is true, of parties in the republic of letters; but if such language is not to be considered as entirely allusive and metaphorical, the ties which unite them are so slight and feeble, compared to those which attach to religious societies, as scarcely to deserve the name. The spirit of party was much more sensibly felt in the ancient schools of philosophy than in modern, on account of philosophical inquiries embracing a class of subjects, which are now considered as no longer belonging to its province. Before revelation appeared, whatever is most deeply interesting in

the contemplation of God, of man, or of a future state, fell under the cognizance of philosophy; and hence, it was cultivated with no inconsiderable portion of that moral sensibility, that solicitude and alternation of hope and fear, respecting an invisible state, which are now absorbed by the gospel. From that time, the departments of theology and philosophy have become totally distinct; and the genius of the former, free and unfettered.

In religious inquiries, few feel themselves at liberty to follow, without restraint, the light of evidence, and the guidance of truth, in consequence of some previous engagement with a party; and though the attachment to it might originally be purely voluntary, and still continues such, the natural love of consistency, the fear of shame, together with other motives sufficiently obvious, powerfully contribute to perpetuate and confirm it. When an attachment to the fundamental truths of religion is the basis of the alliance, the steadiness, constancy, and perseverance it produces, are of the utmost advantage; and hence, we admire the wisdom of Christ, in employing and consecrating the social nature of man in the formation of a church. It is utterly impossible, to calculate the benefits of the publicity and support, which Christianity derives from that source; nor will it be doubted, that the intrepidity evinced in confessing the most obnoxious truths, and enduring all the indignities and sufferings which result from their promulgation, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the same cause. The concentration of the wills and efforts of Christians, rendered the church a powerful antagonist to the world. But when the Christian profession became split and divided into separate communities, each of which, along with certain fundamental truths, retained a portion of error, its reformation became difficult, just in proportion to the strength of these combinations. Religious parties imply a tacit compact, not merely to sustain the fundamental truths of revelation, (which was the original design of the constitution of a church) but also to uphold the incidental peculiarities by which they are distinguished. They are so many ramparts or fortifications, erected in order to give security and support to certain systems of doctrine and discipline, beyond what they derive from their native force and evidence.

The difficulty of reforming the corruptions of Christianity is great, in a state of things, where the fear of being eclipsed, and the anxiety in each denomination to extend itself as much as possible, engage, in spite of the personal piety of its members, all the solicitude and ardor which are not immediately devoted to the most essential truths; where correct conceptions, on subordinate subjects, are scarcely aimed at, but the particular views which the party has adopted, are either objects of indolent acquiescence, or

zealous attachment. In such a state, opinions are no otherwise regarded, than as they affect the interest of a party; whatever conduces to augment its members, or its credit, must be supported at all events; whatever is of a contrary tendency, discountenanced and suppressed. How often do we find much zeal expended in the defence of sentiments, recommended neither by their evidence nor their importance, which, could their incorporation with an established creed be forgotten, would be quietly consigned to oblivion. Thus the waters of life, instead of that unobstructed circulation which would diffuse health, fertility, and beauty, are diverted from their channels, and drawn into pools and reservoirs, where, from their stagnant state, they acquire feculence and pollution.

The inference we would deduce from these facts is, that if we wish to revive an exploded truth, or to restore an obsolete practice, it is of the greatest moment to present it to the public, in a manner least likely to produce the collision of party. But this is equivalent to saying, in other words, that it ought not to be made the basis of a sect; for the prejudices of party are always reciprocal, and in no instance is that great law of motion more applicable, that re-action is always equal to action, and contrary thereto. While it is maintained as a private opinion, by which I mean one not characteristic of a sect, it stands upon its proper merits, mingles with facility in different societies, and in proportion to its evidence, and the attention it excites, insinuates itself like leaven, till the whole is leavened.

Such, it should seem, was the conduct of the Baptists before the time of Luther. It appears, from the testimony of ecclesiastical historians, that their sentiments prevailed to a considerable extent among the Waldenses and Albigenses, the precursors of the Reformation, to whom the crime of anabaptism is frequently ascribed, among other heresies; it is probable, however, that it did not prevail universally; nor is there the smallest trace to be discovered of its being made a term of communion. When the same opinions on this subject were publicly revived in the sixteenth century, under the most unfavorable auspices, and allied with turbulence, anarchy, and blood, no wonder they met with an unwelcome reception, and that, contemplated through such a medium, they incurred the reprobation of the wise and good. Whether the English Baptists held at first any part of the wild and seditious sentiments of the German fanatics, it is difficult to say; supposing they did, (of which I am not aware there is the smallest evidence) it is certain they soon abandoned them, and adopted the same system of religion with other non-conformists, except on the article of baptism. But it is much to be lamented, that they con-

tinued to insist on that article as a term of communion, by which they excited the resentment of other denominations, and facilitated the means of confounding them with the German Anabaptists, with whom they possessed nothing in common, besides an opinion on one particular rite. One feature of resemblance, however, joined to an identity of name, was sufficient to surmount, in the public feeling, the impression of all the points of discrepancy or of contrast, and to subject them to a portion of the infamy attached to the ferocious insurgents of Munster. From that period, the success of the Baptist sentiments became identified with the growth of a sect, which, rising under the most unfavorable auspices, was entirely destitute of the resources of worldly influence, and the means of popular attraction ; and an opinion which, by its native simplicity and evidence, is entitled to command the suffrages of the world, was pent up and confined within the narrow precincts of a party, where it laboured under an insupportable weight of prejudice. It was seldom examined by an impartial appeal to the sacred oracles, or regarded in any other light, than as the whimsical appendage of a sect, who disgraced themselves at the outset, by the most criminal excesses, and were, at no subsequent period, sufficiently distinguished by talents or numbers, to command general attention.

Nothing is more common, than for zeal to overshoot its mark. If a determined enemy of the Baptists had been consulted on the most effectual method of rendering their principles unpopular, there is little doubt but that he would have recommended the very measures we have pursued ; the first and most obvious effect of which has been to generate an inconceivable mass of prejudice in other denominations. To proclaim to the world our determination, to treat as "heathen-men and publicans," all who are not immediately prepared to concur with our views of baptism, what is it less, than the language of hostility and defiance, admirably adapted to discredit the party which exhibits, and the principles which have occasioned such a conduct ? By thus investing these principles with an importance which does not belong to them, by making them co-extensive with the existence of a church, they have indisposed men to listen to the evidence by which they are supported ; and attempting to establish by authority, the unanimity which should be the fruit of conviction, have deprived themselves of the most effectual means of producing it. To say, that such a mode of proceeding is not adapted to convince, that refusing Pædobaptists the right of communion has no tendency to produce a change of views, is to employ most inadequate language ; it has a powerful tendency to the contrary ; it can scarcely fail to produce impressions most unfavorable to the system

with which it is connected, impressions which the gentlest minds find it difficult to distinguish from the effects of insult and degradation.

It is not, however, merely by this sort of re-action, that prejudice is excited, unfavorable to the extension of our principles; but by the instinctive feelings of self-defence. Upon the system of strict communion, the moment a member of a Pædobaptist church becomes convinced of the invalidity of his infant baptism, he must deem it obligatory upon him to relinquish his station, and dissolve his connexion with the church; and as superiority of ministerial talents and character is a mere matter of preference, but duty a matter of necessity, he must at all events connect himself with a Baptist congregation, whatever sacrifice it may cost him, and whatever loss he may incur. Though his pastor should possess the profundity and unction of an Edwards, or the eloquence of a Spencer, he must quit him for the most superficial declaimer, rather than be guilty of spiritual fornication. How is it possible for principles fraught with such a corollary, not to be contemplated with anxiety by our Pædobaptist brethren, who, however they might be disposed to exercise candor towards our sentiments, considered in themselves, cannot fail to perceive the most disorganizing tendency in this their usual appendage. Viewed in such a connexion, their prevalence is a blow at the very root of Pædobaptist societies, since the moment we succeed in making a convert, we disqualify him for continuing a member. We deposit a seed of alienation and discord, which threatens their dissolution; so that we need not be surprised if other denominations should be tempted to compare us to the Euphratean horsemen in the Apocalypse, who are described as "having tails like scorpions, and with them they did hurt."

To these causes we must undoubtedly impute the superior degree of prejudice displayed by that class of Christians, to whom we make the nearest approach, compared to such as are separated from us by a wider interval. A disposition to fair and liberal concession on the points at issue, is almost confined to the members of established churches; and while the most celebrated Episcopal divines, both Popish and Protestant, as well as those of the Scotch church, feel no hesitation in acknowledging the import of the word baptize is to *immerse*, that such was the primitive mode of baptism, and that the right of infants to that ordinance is rather to be sustained on the ground of ancient usage than the authority of Scripture, our dissenting brethren are displeased with these concessions, deny there is any proof that immersion was ever used in primitive times, and speak of the extension of baptism to infants

with as much confidence, as though it were amongst the plainest and most undeniable dictates of revelation.*

To such a height has this animosity been carried, that there are not wanting persons, who seem anxious to revive the recollection of Munster, and by republishing the narrative of the enormities perpetrated there, under the title of the History of the Baptists, to implicate us in the infamy and guilt of those transactions. While we must reprobate such a spirit, we are compelled to acknowledge that the practice of exclusive communion is admirably adapted to excite it, in minds of a certain order.

That practice is not less objectionable on another ground. By discouraging Pædobaptists from frequenting our assemblies, it militates against the most effectual means of diffusing the sentiments which we consider most consonant to the sacred oracles. It cannot be expected, that pious worshippers will attend, except from absolute necessity, where they are detained, if we may so speak, in the courts of the Gentiles, and denied access to the interior privileges of the sanctuary.

The congregations accordingly, where this practice prevails, are almost entirely composed of persons of our own persuasion, who are so far from requiring an additional stimulus, that it is much oftener necessary to restrain than to excite their ardor; while the

* Campbell, speaking of the authors of the vulgate version, observes—"Some words they have transferred from the original into their language; others they have translated. But it would not be always easy to find their reason for making this difference. Thus the word *περιτομή* they have translated *circumcisio*, which exactly corresponds in etymology; but the word *βαντιουα* they have retained, changing only the letters from Greek to Roman. Yet the latter was just as susceptible of a literal version into Latin as the former. *Immersio, tinctio*, answers as exactly in one case, as *circumcisio* in the other." A little after he observes—"I should think the word immersion (which though of Latin origin, is an English noun, regularly formed from the word to *immerse*,) a better English name than baptism, were we now at liberty to make a choice; but we are not."—*Preliminary Dissertations to the Translation of the Gospels*, pp. 354, 355, 4to ed.—He elsewhere mentions it as one of the strongest instances of prejudice, that he has known some persons of piety who have denied, that the word baptize signifies to immerse.

With respect to the *subject*, it is worthy of observation, that the authors of the celebrated scheme of Popish doctrine and discipline called the *Interim*, enumerate the baptism of infants among *traditions*, and that in the most emphatic manner. For having stated that the church has two rules of faith, Scripture and tradition, they observe, after treating of the first, "*ecclesia habet quoque traditiones, inter alia baptismus parvulorum*," &c. They mention, however, no other, from whence it is natural to infer, that they considered this as the strongest instance of that species of rules. The total silence of Scripture has induced not a few of the most illustrious scholars to consider infant baptism not of divine right; amongst whom, were we disposed to boast of great names, we might mention Salmasius, Suicer, and, above all, Sir Isaac Newton, who, if we may believe the honest Whiston, frequently declared to him his conviction that the Baptists were the only Christians who had not symbolized with the church of Rome.—See *Whiston's Memoirs of his own Life*.

only description of persons who could be possibly benefitted by instruction, are out of its reach ; compelled by this intolerable practice to join societies, where they will hear nothing but what is adapted to confirm them in their ancient prejudices. Thus an impassable barrier is erected betwixt the Baptists and other denominations, in consequence of which, few opportunities are afforded of trying the effect of calm and serious argumentation, in situations where alone it could prove effectual. In those Baptist churches in which an opposite plan has been adopted, the attendance of such as are not of our sentiments meeting with no discouragement, is often extensive ; Baptists and Pædobaptists, by participating in the same privileges, become closely united in the ties of friendship ; of which the effect is uniformly found to be a perpetual increase in the number of the former, compared to the latter, till in some societies the opposite sentiments have nearly subsided and disappeared.

Nor is this more than might be expected from the nature of things, supposing us to have truth on our side. For admitting this to be the case, what can give permanence to the sentiments to which we are opposed, except a recumbent indolence, or an active prejudice ; and is it not evident, that the practice of exclusive communion has the strongest tendency to foster both these evils, the former by withdrawing, I might say repelling, the erroneous from the best means of instruction, the latter by the apparent harshness and severity of such a proceeding. It is not by keeping at a distance from mankind, that we must expect to acquire an ascendancy over them, but by approaching, by conciliating them, and securing a passage to their understanding through the medium of their hearts. Truth will glide into the mind through the channel of the affections, which, were it to approach in the naked majesty of evidence, would meet with a certain repulse.

Betraying a total ignorance or forgetfulness of these indubitable facts, what is the conduct of our opponents ? They assume a menacing aspect, proclaim themselves the only true church, and assert, that they alone are entitled to the Christian sacraments. None are alarmed at this language, none are induced to submit, but turning with a smile or a frown to gentler leaders, they leave us to triumph without a combat, and to dispute without an opponent.

If we consider the way in which men are led to form just conclusions on the principal subjects of controversy, we shall not often find, that it is the fruit of an independent effort of mind, determined to search for truth in her most hidden recesses, and discover her under every disguise. The number of such elevated spirits is small ; and though evidence is the only source of ration-

al conviction, a variety of favorable circumstances usually contribute to bring it into contact with the mind, such as frequent intercourse, a favorable disposition towards the party which maintains it, habits of deference and respect, and gratitude for benefits received. The practice of confining the communion to our own denomination, seems studiously contrived to preclude us from these advantages, and to transfer them to the opposite side.

The policy of intolerance is exactly proportioned to the capacity of inspiring fear. The Church of Rome for many ages practised it, with infinite advantage, because she possessed ample means of intimidation. Her pride grew with her success, her intolerance with her pride; and she did not aspire to the lofty pretension of being the only *true church* till she saw monarchs at her feet, and held kingdoms in chains; till she was flushed with victory, giddy with her elevation, and drunk with the blood of the saints. But what was policy in her, would be the height of infatuation in us, who are neither entitled by our situation, nor by our crimes, to aspire to this guilty preeminence. I am fully persuaded, that few of our brethren have duly reflected on the strong resemblance which subsists betwixt the pretensions of the Church of Rome, and the principles implied in strict communion; both equally intolerant, the one armed with pains and penalties, the other, I trust, disdaining such aid; the one the intolerance of power, the other of weakness.

From a full conviction that our views, as a denomination, correspond with the dictates of Scripture, it is impossible for me to entertain a doubt of their ultimate prevalence; but unless we retrace our steps, and cultivate a cordial union with our fellow-Christians, I greatly question whether their success will in any degree be ascribable to our efforts. It is much more probable, that the light will arise in another quarter, from persons by whom we are unknown, but who, in consequence of an unction from the Holy One, are led to examine the Scripture with perfect impartiality, and in the ardor of their pursuit after truth, alike to overlook the misconduct of those who have opposed, and of those who have maintained it.

Happily, the final triumph of truth is not dependent on human modes of exhibition. Man is the recipient, not the author of it; it partakes of the nature of the Deity; it is His offspring, its indissoluble relation to whom is a surer pledge of its perpetuity and support, than finite power or policy. While we are at a certainty respecting the final issue, "the times and the seasons God hath put in his own power;" nor are we ever more liable to err, than when in surveying the purposes of God, we descend from the elevation of general views, to a minute specification of times and in-

struments. How long the ordinance of baptism, in its purity and simplicity, may be doomed to neglect, it is not for us to conjecture; but of this we are fully persuaded, it will never be generally restored to the church through the medium of a party. This mode of procedure has been already sufficiently tried, and is found utterly ineffectual.

The labor bestowed upon these sheets has not arisen from an indifference to the interests of truth, but from a sincere wish to promote them, by disengaging it from the unnatural confinement in which it has been detained by the injudicious conduct of its advocates. How far the reasoning adduced, or the spirit displayed on this subject, is entitled to approbation, must be left to the judgement of the religious public. If any offence has been given by the appearance of unbecoming severity, it will give me real concern; and the more so, because there are not a few amongst our professed opponents in this controversy, to whom I look up with undissembled esteem and veneration.

Having omitted nothing which appeared essentially connected with the subject, I hasten to close this disquisition; previously to which, it may not be improper briefly to recall the attention to the principal topics of argument. We have endeavored to shew that the practice of strict communion derives no support from the supposed priority of baptism to the Lord's supper in the order of institution, which order is exactly the reverse; that it is not countenanced by the tenor of the Apostle's commission, nor by apostolic precedent, the spirit of which is in our favor, proceeding on principles totally dissimilar to the case under discussion; that the opposite practice is enforced by the obligations of Christian charity; that it is indubitably comprehended within the canon which enjoins forbearance towards mistaken brethren; that the system of our opponents *unchurches* every Pædobaptist community; that it rests on no general principle; that it attempts to establish an impossible medium; that it inflicts a punishment which is capricious and unjust; and finally, that by fomenting prejudice, and precluding the most effectual means of conviction, it defeats its own purpose.

Should the reasoning under any one of these heads be found to be conclusive, however it may fail in others, it will go far towards establishing our leading position, that no church has a right to establish *terms of communion, which are not terms of salvation*. With high consideration for the talents of many of my brethren who differ from me, I have yet no apprehension that the sum total of the argument admits a satisfactory reply.

A tender consideration of human imperfection is not merely the dictate of revelation, but the law of nature, exemplified in the most

striking manner, in the conduct of Him whom we all profess to follow. How wide the interval which separated His religious knowledge and attainments from that of His disciples ; He, the fountain of illumination, they encompassed with infirmities. But did He recede from them on that account? No ; He drew the bond of union closer, imparted successive streams of effulgence, till He incorporated His spirit with theirs, and elevated them into a nearer resemblance of himself. In imitating by our conduct towards our mistaken brethren this great exemplar, we cannot err. By walking together with them as far as we are agreed, our agreement will extend, our differences lessen, and love, which rejoiceth in the truth, will gradually open our hearts to higher and nobler inspirations.

Might we indulge a hope, that not only our denomination, but every other description of Christians, would act upon these principles, we should hail the dawn of a brighter day, and consider it as a nearer approach to the ultimate triumph of the church, than the annals of time have yet recorded. In the accomplishment of our Saviour's prayer, we should behold a demonstration of the divinity of His mission, which the most impious could not resist ; we should behold in the church a peaceful haven, inviting us to retire from the tossings and perils of this unquiet ocean, to a sacred inclosure, a sequestered spot, which the storms and tempests of the world were not permitted to invade.

*" Intus aquæ dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo ;
Nympharum domus ; hic fessas non vincula naves
Ulla tenent, unco non alligat anchora morsu."* VIRGIL.

The genius of the gospel, let it once for all be remembered, is not ceremonial, but spiritual, consisting not in meats or drinks, or outward observances, but in the cultivation of such interior graces, as compose the essence of virtue, perfect the character, and purify the heart. These form the soul of religion ; all the rest are but her terrestrial attire, which she will lay aside when she passes the threshold of eternity. When, therefore, the obligations of humility and love come into competition with a punctual observance of external rites, the genius of religion will easily determine to which we should incline ; but when the question is not, whether we shall attend to them ourselves, but whether we shall enforce them on others, the answer is still more ready. All attempts to urge men forward even in the right path, beyond the measure of their light, are impracticable in our situation, if they were lawful ; and unlawful, if they were practicable. Augment their light, conciliate their affections, and they will follow of their own accord.

POSTSCRIPT.

AN objection to the hypothesis which assigns the origin of *Christian* baptism to the commission which the Apostles received at our Lord's resurrection, may possibly be urged from the baptisms performed by his disciples during his personal ministry ; and as no notice is taken of that circumstance in the body of the work, I beg leave to submit the following observations to the reader. We are informed by one of the evangelists, that Christ, by the instrumentality of his disciples, at one period "made and baptized more disciples than John." (John iv. 1.) The following remarks may possibly cast some light on this subject.

1. A divine commission was given to the son of Zechariah, to announce the speedy manifestation of the Messiah ; or which is equivalent, to declare that "the Kingdom of God was at hand ;" with an injunction solemnly to immerse in water as many, as, in consequence of that intelligence, professed repentance and reformation of life ; and as he was the only person who had been known to initiate his disciples by that rite, it was natural for him to be distinguished by the appellation of the Baptist, or the Immerser. The Scriptures are totally silent respecting any commission to baptize apart from him. It is by no means certain, however, that he was the only person who performed that ceremony ; indeed, when we consider the prodigious multitudes who flocked to him, the "inhabitants of Jerusalem, Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan," it seems scarcely practicable ; he most probably employed coadjutors, though the practice having originated with him, it was foreign to the purpose of the evangelists to notice that circumstance.

2. Our Lord, who had already evinced the profoundest respect to his mission, by receiving baptism at his hands, was, in consequence of his being the Messiah, undoubtedly authorized personally to perform any religious rite or office which was at that time in force, as well as to delegate to others the power of performing it ; and as immersion in token of repentance and preparation for the Kingdom of God, then at hand, was an important branch of the religion then obligatory, it was with the greatest propriety that he not only submitted to it himself, but authorized his disciples to perform it. This, however, is by no means sufficient to constitute a distinct rite or ordinance ; and since it was not accompanied with

a distinct confession of faith, nor possessed any distinct signification, it could not be considered as originating a new institution, but as a mere co-operation with his forerunner in one and the same work.

3. We have already shewn at large, that the principal difference betwixt John's baptism, and that which the Apostles were commissioned to perform after our Saviour's ascension, consisted in the former not being celebrated in the name of Jesus. But there is just as much difficulty in supposing it performed by his disciples in that name, during his abode on earth, as by his forerunner. It would have equally defeated the purpose of that caution which he uniformly maintained; and it is absurd to suppose, that he would strictly charge his disciples to tell no man that he was the Christ, while he authorized them to disclose that very secret to the mixed multitude, as often as they baptized; nor could the use of his name, in that ordinance, be separated from such a disclosure.

4. In addition to this, it must be remembered, that John, and our Lord (by the hands of his disciples) both baptized at the same period; their ministry was contemporary. Now if we assert, that our Lord enjoined one confession of faith in baptism, and John another, we shall have different dispensations of religion subsisting at the same time, and must suppose the people were under an obligation to believe one thing, as the disciples of John, and another, as the disciples of Christ. But this it is impossible to admit. There is unquestionably at all seasons, a perfect harmony in the economies of religion, so that two different ones are never in force at one and the same time. The first ceases when the next succeeds, just as Judaism was abolished by Christianity, and the Patriarchal dispensation superseded by Judaism. Unless we are prepared to assert, that the dispensations of religion are not obligatory, one light in which they must be considered, is that of different laws, or codes of law; but it is essential to the nature of laws, that the new one, except it be merely declaratory, invariably repeals the old. In whatever particular it differs, it necessarily abolishes or annuls the former. But as John continued to baptize by divine authority, at the same time with the disciples of our Saviour, it is evident, his institution was not superseded. Consequently, it was of such a nature, that it could subsist in conjunction with the baptisms performed by our Lord, through the hands of his Apostles. But for the reason already alleged, this could not have been the case, unless it had been one and the same thing. The inference I wish to deduce from the whole, is, that the baptisms celebrated by Christ's disciples during his personal ministry, in no respect differed from John's either in the action itself, or in the import, but were merely a joint execution of the same work; agreeably to

which, we find a perfect identity in the language which our Saviour enjoined his disciples to use, and in the preaching of John ; "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Whatever information our Lord imparted to his disciples, beyond that which was communicated by his forerunner, (which we all know was much) was given in detached portions, at distinct intervals, and was never embodied or incorporated with any positive institution, till after his ascension, which may be considered as the commencement of the Christian dispensation in its strictest sense.

THE
ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM
AND THE
BAPTISM OF JOHN
MORE FULLY STATED AND CONFIRMED;
IN REPLY TO A PAMPHLET, ENTITLED,
"A PLEA FOR PRIMITIVE COMMUNION."

PREFACE.

WHETHER the Writer of the following pages has acted judiciously in noticing the anonymous author of the *Plea*, &c. it is not for him to determine. He was certainly not induced to reply, by any apprehension that the arguments of his opponent would produce much effect on candid and enlightened minds; but he recollected that what is not answered, is often deemed unanswerable. He has confined himself, as the reader will perceive, to that branch of the controversy which relates to the baptism of John; the consideration of the remaining parts will more properly occur, in reply to a work which is already announced to the public, by a person of distinguished reputation.* With an answer to that publication, it is the decided resolution of this Author to terminate *his* part of the controversy.

Leicester, Feb. 14, 1816.

* Rev. Joseph Kinghorn. The reply to his work, published in 1818, is the next article in this compilation.—ED.

THE
ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM
AND THE
BAPTISM OF JOHN,
&c. &c.

THOUGH the author of the "Plea for Primitive Communion" has not thought fit to annex his name to that publication, as truth alone is the legitimate object of controversy, his claim to attention may be justly considered as little, if at all, impaired by that omission. Religious inquiry is an affair of principles, not of persons; and under whatever shape an author chooses to present himself to the public, he is entitled to notice in proportion to the force of his conceptions, and the candor of his spirit. How far the author under present consideration is possessed of these qualities, must be left to the judgement of an impartial public.

As he has confined nearly his whole attention to the question of the identity of John's baptism with the ordinance now in force, without pretending to enter into the general merits of the controversy, and this is a question which admits of separate discussion, and is in itself of some moment, the following pages will be devoted to a defence of the sentiments which have been already advanced on that subject.

Previously to this, however, the patience of the reader is entreated for a few moments, while we endeavor clearly to state the *bearing* of this question on the controversy with which it has been connected. It was in deference to the sentiments of his opponents, rather than his own, that the author was induced to bestow so much attention upon it in his former treatise, persuaded as he is, that its connexion with the point in debate is casual and incidental, rather than real and intrinsic; since the only possible advantage to the cause of mixed communion resulting from its decision, is the overthrow of an argument most feebly constructed. To be convinced of this, it is only necessary to remember that the

admission of what our opponents contend for, would merely prove that the ordinance of baptism was promulgated at an *earlier period* than the Lord's supper. But in determining a question of duty resulting from positive laws, the era of their promulgation is a consideration totally foreign ; we have merely to consider *what is enjoined*, and to what description of persons or things the regulation applies, without troubling ourselves to inquire into the chronological order of its enactment. In the details of civil life, no man thinks of regulating his actions by an appeal to the respective dates of the existing laws, but solely by a regard to their just interpretation ; and were it once admitted as a maxim, that the particular law latest enacted must invariably be last obeyed, the affairs of mankind would fall into utter confusion. It would be the highest presumption to pretend to penetrate so far into the breast of the legislator, and into reasons of state, as to form a conjecture on the comparative importance of our duties, or the respective relations which they bear to each other, by an appeal to the distinct periods in which the laws were promulgated ; nor is there any absurdity in supposing it possible, that for the wisest purposes the law which is *last* enacted may prescribe the performance of an action antecedently to a different one enjoined by a prior enactment. Besides, the most extensive branch of the system of rules which is in force in this, and perhaps in most other countries, arises out of immemorial customs, which it would baffle the profoundest antiquarian to trace to their origin ; whence it is evident that the principle in question is necessarily excluded from the widest department of legal obligations. It is a principle as repugnant to the nature of divine, as it is to human legislation. It appears from the history of the patriarchs, that sacrificial rites were ordained much earlier than circumcision ; but no sooner was the latter enjoined, than it demanded the earliest attention, and the offerings prescribed on the birth of a child did not precede, but were subsequent to, the ceremony of circumcision.

In the case of moral obligations, no one pretends that their reciprocal relation and dependance is to be ascertained by an appeal to the distinct periods of their institution : their co-existence with human nature precludes the possibility of applying such a test ; and he who consults impartially the dictates of conscience, confirmed and enlightened by revelation, will seldom feel himself embarrassed with respect either to the nature or the order of his duties.

In the case of positive duties, that is, such as result entirely from the *revealed* will of God, and with respect to which the voice of nature is silent, how far they are so inseparably linked together as to form a moral whole, in such a manner that the omission of

one part renders an attention to the other a nullity, must depend entirely on the language of the institute. To attempt to establish any conclusion where that is silent, is at once to incur the censure justly attached to the application of hypothesis in the interpretation of positive laws, with this additional aggravation, that the hypothesis adopted on the present occasion, is at least as precarious and unfounded, as the worst of those by which the advocates of infant baptism have attempted to vindicate their practice. With unparalleled inconsistency, while the champions of strict communion affect, on the subject of baptism, the utmost veneration for the letter of Scripture, they are driven in support of their sentiments to appeal, not to *what is enjoined*—not to a syllable of Scripture, but to a chronological deduction of positive rites; a hard necessity surely, and the more so when it will appear in the sequel, that this their forlorn post is untenable.

Before we proceed to notice the objections of the author of the “Plea” to the statements which have been made on the subject of John’s baptism, it will be necessary briefly to recapitulate the grounds on which it was affirmed to be essentially distinct from the ordinance now in use. To such as have not perused the former treatise, the discussion would scarcely be intelligible without it; to such as have, it is possible some particulars may be presented in a clearer light.

The attentive reader of the New Testament will not fail to have remarked, that the rite performed by John is rarely, if ever, introduced without the addition of some explanatory phrase or epithet, intended apparently to distinguish it from every preceding or subsequent religious observance. Thus it is sometimes denominated the ‘baptism of John,’ on other occasions ‘baptism in water,’ and the ‘baptism of repentance,’ but is never expressed in the absolute form in which the mention of Christian baptism invariably occurs. When the twelve disciples at Ephesus are asked into what (i. e. into what profession) they were baptized, they reply, ‘Into the baptism of John.’ Though innumerable persons were baptized by St. Paul, we read of no such expression as the baptism of Paul; on the contrary, in his epistle to the Corinthians he expresses a sort of pious horror at the very idea of such a supposition. Whoever considers the extreme precision which the inspired historians maintain in the choice of the terms employed to represent religious ordinances, will perceive this circumstance to possess considerable weight. *A*

It derives much additional strength however from reflecting that John’s baptism is not only distinctly characterized in the evangelical narratives, but that he himself contrasts it with a superior one, which he directs his hearers to expect at the hand of the

Messiah. "I indeed," said he, "baptize you in water, but there standeth one among you, whose shoe-latchets I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire;" referring unquestionably to that redundancy of prophetic and miraculous gifts, which were bestowed on the church, after the effusion of the Spirit. We accordingly find that, after his resurrection, our Lord commissioned his Apostles to teach and baptize all nations, the execution of which order was *usually* accompanied by the collation of such gifts on believers, as fully corresponded to those predictions. Though he who is confined to no times or seasons, was pleased in some instances to communicate these preternatural endowments, previously to the act of baptizing, at others not in connexion with that rite, yet that they were its usual and expected concomitants, is evident from the language of St. Paul to the disciples at Ephesus, who not having heard of such an effusion of the Spirit were interrogated in the following terms; "Into what then were ye baptized?" a question totally irrelevant, but upon the supposition that these gifts were the usual appendage or effect of that ordinance. No such consequences followed the rite administered by John; an important disparity, to which he himself repeatedly directed the attention of his followers, as a decisive proof of his personal inferiority to him that *was to come*, as well as of the ceremony he administered, to that which should usher in the succeeding dispensation. In exact agreement with the genius of eastern phrasology, he suppresses the mention of *water* on this occasion, choosing rather to characterize an ordinance accompanied with such stupendous effects, by its more elevated feature, rather than by one, in which it coincided with his own.

Again, it is universally admitted that Christian baptism has invariably been administered in the name of Jesus, and that circumstance is essential to its validity; while it is evident from the solicitude with which our Saviour avoided the avowal of himself as the Messiah, that during his personal ministry, his name was not publicly employed as the object of a religious rite. After he had been declared on the mount of transfiguration to be the Son of God, he charged his disciples to tell no man of it, till he was risen from the dead, and when Peter had solemnly avowed his profession of faith in him under the same character, he and his fellow-apostles were strictly enjoined to tell no man that he *was the Christ*. Nor is there a single example of his publicly acknowledging that fact, until his arraignment before the High Priest. But how this is consistent with the practice of baptizing in his name, which must have been equivalent at least to a public confession of his being the Messiah, it is difficult to conceive. If we examine the matter

more closely, we shall perceive that ceremony to import much more, that it includes an act of adoration and of worship, of which he in whose name we are immersed is the avowed object. To multiply words with a view to demonstrate the inconsistency of such a procedure, with the acknowledged reserve maintained by our Lord on this subject, would be to insult the understanding of my readers; nor when furnished with certain matter of fact, are we left to form an opinion from previous probabilities. The historian informs us that while John was baptizing, amidst an immense concourse of people from various parts of Judæa, *all men were musing in their hearts whether he were the Christ or not*, (Luke iii. 15,) and that the deputation sent from the Sanhedrim to inquire into his character, were disposed to infer from his introducing a new religious rite, that he pretended himself to be the Messiah. But how is it possible, let me ask, that such a question should arise amongst the people, on the hypothesis maintained by our opponents? or how could it enter into their imagination to infer, from his baptizing in the name of Jesus, that he himself was, or that he pretended to be, the Messiah? His constant and daily practice must have completely precluded such a suspicion.

If St. Paul's citation of the language of John, in the nineteenth of the Acts, be correct, what he said to the people was this—"That they *should* believe on him who was to come." (Acts xix. 4.) The epithet *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, *he who is coming*, it is generally admitted, was the usual appellation applied to the Messiah at that period, which, while it expresses the certainty and near approach of the event of his coming, intimates not less clearly its *futurity*. At the time when the son of Zechariah entered on his ministry, nothing could be more accurate than the idea conveyed by that phraseology—the Messiah was not yet manifest to Israel; John was sent before him, to announce his speedy appearance; he was as yet coming, not actually come; on which account, the language which the forerunner held was precise and appropriate; it was not a demand of present faith in any known individual, but was limited to a *future* faith on a certain personage who was about to evince his title to the character he assumed, by his personal appearance and miracles. He said to the people that they *should* believe in him that was to come. Could the same person, let me ask, at the same moment be described by terms expressive of the present and of the future tense—at once as an existing individual, a person historically known, and as one that was to come? In a word, if John expressed the act of faith which he required, in the future tense, (*πιστεύωσι*, Acts xix. 4,) it unquestionably respected a future act; and if he described its object under the term *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, *he that is to come*, he did not immerse in the name of Jesus, which would have been a palpable contradiction.

Again, the spiritual import of Christian baptism, as asserted by St. Paul, transcends incomparably the measure of religious knowledge possessed during the ministry of John. "Know ye not," is his appeal to Christians, "that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans vi. 4.) We have here an appeal to the conscience of all baptized persons respecting the spiritual signification of that ordinance, the views which it embraced, and the obligations resulting from thence to a holy and heavenly life. What is the meaning of the words *baptized into his death*? Whatever else it may comprehend, it unquestionably means the being baptized into a belief of his death. But at the time that John was fulfilling his course, this belief was so far from possessing the minds of his converts, that even the Apostles were not only ignorant of that event, but impatient of its mention; and with respect to his resurrection we find these same Apostles after the transfiguration inquiring among themselves "what the rising from the dead could mean;" (Mark ix. 10.) while from the expectation of the Jews at large, nothing was more abhorrent than the death and crucifixion of their Messiah. While they were thus unacquainted with the principal fact it is designed to exhibit, how could they possibly comprehend the import of Christian baptism? In all probability they regarded the consecrated use of water merely as an emblem of purification, of that reformation of manners to which they were summoned; for to such a use of it they had long been accustomed; but for the sublime mysteries of the Christian sacrament, connected with events of which they were ignorant, and with truths which were veiled from their eyes, they were utterly unprepared. It is impossible to evade the force of this argument, by distinguishing betwixt the disciples of John, and those who were converted to the Christian faith at a subsequent period. The language of St. Paul precludes the possibility of such a distinction. "*As many of us*," says he, "as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death;" which is surely equivalent to affirming that whoever were not baptized into his death, were not baptized into Christ. But the disciples of John were not baptized into (the belief of) his death. Therefore they were not baptized into Christ.

We have already remarked, in a former treatise, that as the ministry of John commenced previously to that of the Messiah, which succeeded his baptism, no rite celebrated at that time is entitled to a place amongst Christian sacraments, since they did not commence with the Christian dispensation, nor issue from the authority of Christ as Head of the Church. The sacraments prop-

erly Christian, undoubtedly belong to *the kingdom of God*, a phrase which is constantly employed in Scripture to denote that state of things which is placed under the avowed administration of the Messiah, and which consequently could not precede his personal appearance. But during his residence on earth, until his resurrection, this kingdom is uniformly represented as future, though near at hand. Even after John's imprisonment, the language which he held respecting that object is the same; "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel;" (Mark 1: 15.) which is also the precise intelligence he commanded the seventy disciples to proclaim, (Luke 10: 11.) a little before his decease. He was inaugurated into his office at his baptism, till which period he remained in the obscurity of private life, at the utmost remove from assuming a legislative character.

An attention to the general history of the period to which these transactions refer, will conduct us to the same conclusion. When we consider the great popularity attached to the ministry of the forerunner, and the general submission of the Jewish people to his doctrine, it is in the highest degree improbable, that of the three thousand who were added by St. Peter to the church on one day, there were none who had been previously his disciples; this incredible supposition is reduced to an impossibility, when we recollect that of the twelve Apostles, two are actually affirmed by an Evangelist to have been of that number. But as it is universally admitted that they who were savingly convinced of the truth of Christianity after the Pentecost, were baptized on that occasion, what conclusion can be more inevitable, than that the rite administered by the harbinger of our Lord, was essentially distinct from the Christian ordinance?

To conclude this branch of the subject, the Acts of the Apostles furnish us with a decisive instance of an Apostle's rebaptizing certain disciples of John at Ephesus; but as we shall have occasion hereafter to examine that incident more fully, in reply to the evasions of the author of the *Plea*, I shall content myself at present with barely referring to it.

Such are the principal grounds on which we have ventured to assert the fundamental disparity betwixt the baptism of John, and the Christian institute.

We now proceed to notice the manner in which the author of the *Plea for Primitive Communion* attempts to evade these arguments.

I. He endeavors to invalidate the assertion that John's commission did not originate in the command of Christ, or that he on any occasion ascribes his mission to the Father, in distinction from

the Son. The author of *Terms of Communion* is charged with representing "John as uniformly doing that of which there is no decisive evidence he ever did at all, that is, ascribe his commission to the Father, *in distinction from the Son.*" (Plea for Prim. Com. p. 21.)

We should have supposed that when the origin of a certain proceeding is constantly assigned to one agent, and no notice is taken of another, there is no impropriety in affirming that the proceeding in question is ascribed to him who *is* mentioned, in distinction from him who *is not*. But let the Scripture speak for itself, and let the reader judge whether John did, or did not, ascribe his commission to the Father, in distinction from any other person. "He who sent me to baptize," said he, "the same said unto me, He on whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on him, He it is who shall baptize in the Holy Ghost, and in fire." (John 1: 33.) Here the personage speaking distinguishes himself from the Messiah, as clearly as words can distinguish him, for he speaks of Christ in the third person, while he himself is denoted by the first; and so uniform is the language of Scripture on this subject, that not a syllable is to be found in which the mission of John is ascribed to any other person than the Father.

But to ascribe any operation whatever to the Father in distinction from the Son, this writer contends, is inconsistent with the belief of the ineffable union which subsists betwixt those divine personages. (Pl. for Prim. Com. p. 21.) "Will those," he asks, "who believe the ineffable union of the Father and the Son, be disposed to conclude from this text that John derived his authority from the Father, to the exclusion of the Son?" To which I reply, that believing firmly as himself, that there is such a union subsisting betwixt the personages in the blessed Godhead as constitutes them one living and true God, instead of inferring from thence the impropriety of distinguishing their operations, it has always appeared to me, that the chief advantage resulting from the doctrine of the Trinity is, that it facilitates our conception of the plan of redemption, in which each of these glorious persons is represented as assuming distinct, though harmonious offices and functions; the Father originating, so to speak, the Son executing, and the Spirit applying the several parts of that stupendous scheme. The Father accordingly is uniformly asserted to have sent the Son, the Son to have assumed the office of Mediator, and the Spirit to be imparted by both, to enlighten and sanctify the elect people of God. If we suffer ourselves to lose sight of such an application of the doctrine, it subsides into barren and useless speculation. And are we to be told that such is the ineffable union betwixt the Father and the Son, that the distinct exercise of these

functions is an impossibility? We should have supposed that the act of *sending*, at least, might be safely ascribed to the Father, in distinction from the Son; unless perhaps this author in the plenitude of his subtlety, has discovered a method by which a person may send himself. In spite of attempts to bewilder the plain reader by unmeaning obstructions, it will remain a palpable fact, that John's commission is ascribed to the Father, and to Him alone; and that having originated before our Saviour assumed the legislative function, it is in no respect entitled to be considered as a Christian institute. In addition to which we have only to remark, that to insist upon deriving John's mission from our Lord, is to implicate him in the charge of employing a collusive mode of reasoning. In reproving the unbelief of the Jews, he observes that "he did not bear witness of himself," for had he done so, "his witness had not been true," in other words, not entitled to credit; but he adds, "there is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness to the truth." (John 5:31—33.) But if the person to whose testimony he appeals in proof of his mission, was sent by himself, where is the force of this reasoning? or what difference in point of credibility is there betwixt his bearing witness of himself, and his prompting another to do it for him?

II. The author of the *Plea* next endeavors to show the *identity* of the qualifications demanded by the forerunner of our Lord, with those which were demanded by his Apostles after the day of Pentecost. After objecting to the accuracy of my statement on that article, without attempting to point out in what its incorrectness consists, he proceeds to remark, that allowing it to be unexceptionably just, it will prove that the requisitions which were supposed to be different, coalesce into one and the same thing. The reason he adduces is the following: "As both John and the Apostles are described as demanding faith, so that faith is to have the same object, and to be connected with the same facts in relation to that object; only some of these facts John's disciples were to view as approaching; while the faith of those baptized by the Apostles, embraced them as having actually occurred; for the great events respecting the Messiah, as boldly appealed to faith, when only occupying the prophetic page, as they do now they are become interesting details in the evangelical history." (Pl. for Prim. Com. p. 23.)

It will be freely admitted that the Saviour of the world is in every period, and under every economy, the sole object of saving faith; but to infer from hence, that the profession which John demanded was an appendage of the dispensation introduced on the day of Pentecost would equally demonstrate the Levitical ceremo-

nies to belong to it, and would thus carry back the Christian dispensation to the time of Moses. The next assertion, "that the belief of the same facts was required in the former instance as in the latter," is palpably absurd, as well as the reason assigned, which is, that they were foretold by the ancient Prophets, and "that prophecy as boldly appealed to faith as the narrative of an Evangelist." Every one must perceive, that if there is any force in this argument, it will prove that *whatever* was predicted of the Messiah, must have been distinctly understood and firmly embraced by the disciples of the forerunner, as an essential prerequisite to the reception of baptism, since whatever was thus predicted was unquestionably presented as the object of faith; the place of his birth, his vicarious sufferings, his resurrection, the spiritual nature of his kingdom, his rejection by the Jews, and the triumphant progress of the gospel amongst the Gentiles, with an infinite number of other particulars, were attested by the Prophets. But will this author contend that all these circumstances were understood by John's converts, at a time when the immediate disciples of our Lord were intoxicated with the hopes of an earthly kingdom, and totally unapprised of their Master's death? Or will he condescend to inform us on what principle so much more was requisite to constitute a disciple of John, than an Apostle of the Lord? Had it been a question of duty, instead of an inquiry into matter of fact, no difficulty would have been felt in acknowledging the justice of the rebuke which the Apostles received for their hardness of heart, in not opening their minds more freely to the true interpretation of Scripture; a cloud of carnal prejudices undoubtedly eclipsed a considerable portion of revealed truth, though with the best dispositions much must have remained obscure till the ancient prophecies were fulfilled. Previous to that period, if we listen to the inspired writers, instead of the author of the *Plea*, neither the Prophets understood their own predictions, nor the Apostles their true interpretation. To apply revelation in its utmost extent, without the smallest allowance for the inevitable involutions of prophecy, as a criterion of the portion of knowledge actually possessed by the successive generations of the faithful is a mode of reasoning peculiar to this writer. We possess in the Apocalypse, a series of prophecies extending to the consummation of all things, a large portion of which is confessedly involved in obscurity; but what opinion should we entertain of the sagacity of him, who at a period subsequent to their accomplishment, should contend that we of this age must necessarily have been apprised of the events which they foretold, solely on the ground of their being the subject of prophecy? Such a reasoner will be the properest person to write a sequel to the *Plea for Primitive Communion*.

The author has been betrayed into these absurdities by confounding together two things totally distinct, a sincere belief in the truth of inspiration, with an explicit knowledge of its contents. The Prophets were invested with credentials which entitled them to the profound submission of mankind ; but to receive their predictions as the word of God, is one thing, and so to penetrate their scope and intention as to be in possession of precisely the same facts, and acquainted with the same truths with those who lived to witness their accomplishment, is another. All good men equally possessing the former, had the same *spirit* of faith ; while with respect to the latter, the situation of the hearers of the Prophets under the law, and of the apostolic converts under the gospel, was most dissimilar. It is certain from the eulogiums bestowed upon John, that his attainments in religious knowledge surpassed the highest of those his predecessors ; yet we are informed from the same authority, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. But in what is this superiority so universally ascribed to Christians to be placed, except in an acquaintance with the facts attested after the day of Pentecost, and a knowledge of the mysteries with which they are inseparably allied ? These however form the very core and substance of the apostolical testimony, the unshaken profession of which was the indispensable condition of baptism ; and among the foremost and most fundamental of these are the vicarious death and resurrection of our Lord, which we are compelled by their own testimony to believe were most remote from the previous expectation and belief of the Apostles. Christian baptism is the “ answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 3: 21.)

In order to demonstrate the equality of the requisitions of John with those of the Apostles, this writer has attempted to exhibit them in opposite columns. These columns, however, are not very majestic, nor very uniform, including only three passages on one side, and four on the other. Two remarks may be amply sufficient to counteract the effect of a device which is addressed to the eyes rather than to the understanding. The first is, that the explicit testimony which the harbinger bore to the character of our Lord after his baptism, is adduced without the slightest advertence to the distinction of times, as a proof of the manner in which he first announced his commission ; but as his knowledge of the person of the Messiah, we learn from his own declaration, was subsequent to that event, his language must necessarily have been modified by that circumstance. The second is, that we have no more reason to suppose that *his* disciples comprehended the true import of his instructions, or that they interpreted them

aright, than that the immediate disciples of our Lord understood similar declarations of their Master ; from whom, we are infallibly certain, the sublimest part of his teaching was hid, until it was elucidated by events. And what but a blind attachment to hypothesis, can obviate the suspicion that the followers of John were in the same predicament, unless we are prepared to affirm, either that they were the apter scholars, or had the more skilful master ? As this writer lately applied the ample volume of prophecy as a criterion to ascertain the minimum, or lowest measure of knowledge requisite to constitute a disciple of John, so he now with equal propriety puts together all the scattered sayings of that great Prophet, for the same purpose. If this be admitted in the case of the forerunner, it can with no consistency be withheld, in the instance of our Lord ; and by measuring the actual attainments of the Apostles, by the extent of his instructions, we shall find them little less enlightened and intelligent after his resurrection, than they were before that event. The fact, however, is far otherwise.

It requires little penetration to perceive, that the true method of ascertaining (as far as it is practicable) the essential qualifications of John's candidates, is not so much to consult detached sentences recorded of his ministry, as the actual state of religious knowledge at that period, the known attainments of the Apostles, and above all, the language he is affirmed to have uttered, at the moment he was celebrating his peculiar rite.

Whatever ideas he himself might affix to the terms "Lamb of God," and "Son of God," which it may not be easy exactly to determine, we may be certain that his followers did not comprehend their true import, because the Apostles themselves were long after ignorant of the principal fact, or doctrine denoted by the first of these appellations ; and, therefore, to introduce these passages, as this writer has done, with a design to insinuate that they conveyed to the mind precisely the same impression as at present, is to presume too much on the simplicity of the reader. He should have been aware, that few are so bereft of the power of recollection, as to be incapable of detecting such flimsy sophistry.

Aware that confidence is contagious, he uniformly abounds in that quality in exact proportion to the weakness of his proofs. Of this, the following passage exhibits an egregious example ; after surveying his columns, with a complacency not unlike the Restorer of Babylon, he triumphantly exclaims, "Even prejudice itself might be expected to acknowledge, that so far from any material variation between John and the Apostles in introducing their respective candidates to baptism, they made a near approach to a syllabic agreement." (Plea for Prim. Com. p. 24.)

To say nothing at present of the name of Jesus, a point we shall have occasion to discuss hereafter, did John require of his candidates a profession of their belief in Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension? If he did, he was a superior teacher to his Master, and his disciples greater proficient than the Apostles; a proposition which, however "boldly it may appeal to our faith," it is hard to digest. If, on the contrary, he acknowledges that a belief of these facts was *not* required by John as the condition of baptism, while it unquestionably was of the apostolic converts, what becomes of his 'syllabic agreement?' and what temerity, not to say impiety, to represent these stupendous events, the death and resurrection of the Saviour, which involve the destinies of the human race, the incessant theme of the apostolic ministry, the basis of hope, the pillar, not the miserable columns of a page, but the column which props and supports a sinking universe, an affair of syllables, so that whether they are omitted or included, there exists a *syllabic agreement*!

Justly apprehensive of fatiguing the attention of the reader, the author cannot prevail on himself to dismiss this branch of the subject without bestowing a word more on the fallacious *medium* of proof employed in this instance by the writer of the *Plea*. Prophecy, he informs us, as "boldly appealed to faith" as history; from which the only legitimate inference is, that the disciple of revelation is as much under obligation to give implicit credit to the Prophets as to the Evangelists. *His* inference, however, is, that the precise measure of information yielded by the historian, must of necessity be possessed by the student of prophecy, than which nothing is more absurd and untenable. To reason in this manner is, in the first place, to forget the prodigious disparity in point of perspicuity betwixt the respective sources of information; and secondly, in opposition to the decisive and repeated testimonies of inspiration, to presume that good men have uniformly exerted the ardor, impartiality, and diligence, in the pursuit of truth, to which it is justly entitled. Besides, when it is asserted that the prophetic page "as boldly appeals to faith as the details of evangelical history," an ambiguity lurks in the word *appeal*, as well suited to the purposes of sophistry, as it is unfavorable to the enunciation of truth. It may either mean that it demands the *same credit* with historical details, or that it imposes an obligation to believe the same facts, and to penetrate the same mysteries. In the former sense the assertion is true, but foreign to the purpose; in the latter it is palpably false; at once repugnant to the nature of things, as well as to the plainest fact. Many of the most important predictions were involved in a total obscurity; others were designed to excite a vague but elevated expectation, without ascertaining

the features of a future event ; none were designed to make that clear and determinate impression upon the spirit, which is effected by their accomplishment. From the necessary obscurity of prophecy, combined with the ignorance and prejudice which obstruct its operation, it is impossible in any case by appealing to a prediction to ascertain the sentiments entertained even by good men antecedently to its fulfilment. The only clue to conduct us in this inquiry, is derived from the assertions of the Evangelists, which as clearly confute the vain surmises and conjectures of this writer as if they had been recorded for that purpose.

The word *faith*, to the illiterate reader, is almost sure to suggest all the sentiments and ideas with which the gospel has made him familiar ; and when we attempt to limit its objects, by an impartial appeal to the actual state of religious knowledge before the coming of Christ, he feels himself confounded and amazed. His exclusive acquaintance with the present disqualifies him for transporting himself into past ages, and conceiving the ideas and sentiments prevalent in a situation so dissimilar. To do justice to the author of the *Plea*, it must be acknowledged he has shewn no inconsiderable skill in availing himself of this prejudice.

What were the *precise views* entertained by the true Israel of the offices of the Messiah, and of the work of redemption, previously to the Christian era, is one of the most curious and intricate questions of theology. Without attempting its solution, the writer of these lines may be permitted to remark, that the Jewish belief was probably much more defective, and differed much farther from the Christian, than has usually been suspected. The ignorance of the Apostles till after the resurrection, is a fundamental fact, a datum, which should never be lost sight of in this inquiry. It is not necessary, however, to assume it as a standard by which to regulate our estimate of every preceding degree of information. For when we recollect the long suspension of prophetic gifts in the Jewish church, the withdrawalment of the Urim and Thummim, the extinction, in its sensible effects at least, of the theocracy, the intermixture of Jews and Gentiles, inseparable from the introduction of a pagan government, the influence of oriental philosophy, the division of the people into sects, and the extreme profligacy and corruption of manners prevalent at the time of our Lord's nativity, it will probably appear to have been the darkest period the church had experienced, resembling that portion of the natural day which immediately precedes the dawn, when the nocturnal light is extinguished, and the reflection of a brighter luminary not commenced.

But with all the consideration due to these circumstances, (and probably much is due) there is still reason to suspect that the ave-

rage degree of knowledge which divines have been accustomed to ascribe to Jewish believers, has been overrated. From the typical institution of piacular sacrifices, pointing to the *great propitiation*, it has been confidently concluded that in them believers distinctly recognized the mystery of atonement, by the blood of Christ. But supposing such to have been the fact, how shall we account for that doctrine occupying so small a portion of the succeeding prophecies? or for its so completely vanishing from the national creed, that the crucifixion of Christ afterwards became a stumbling block to the Jews, not less than foolishness to the Gentiles? A doctrine so congenial to the feelings of penitent devotion, involving the primary basis of hope, had it once been embraced, would undoubtedly have been inculcated with the utmost care, and transmitted to the posterity of the faithful in uninterrupted succession, instead of being suffered to fall into such oblivion, that at the time of the Saviour's advent every trace of it had disappeared. While Christianity subsists, we entertain no apprehension of this great doctrine falling into neglect; its intrinsic evidence and importance will perpetuate it, unquestionably, amidst all the fluctuations of systems and opinions; and by parity of reason, its clear enunciation to the Jewish church must have been productive of similar effects.

If we read the ancient prophecy with attention, we shall perceive, that the atonement made by the Saviour is scarcely exhibited in a single passage, except in the fifty-third of Isaiah, with respect to which the Ethiopian eunuch was at a loss to determine whether the "Prophet spoke of himself, or of some other man." We shall perceive that in the practical and devotional books, such as the Psalms, the promise of pardon to the penitent, and of favor to the righteous, are expressly and repeatedly propounded; though with respect to the *medium* of acceptance, a profound silence is maintained. But how this is consistent with the supposed knowledge of that medium, it is not easy to discover. The habitual reserve on this subject maintained by the writers of the Old Testament, compared to its constant inculcation in the New, forms the grand distinction betwixt these respective portions of revelation; clearly evincing the truth of the Apostle's assertion, that the way into the Holiest was not made manifest while the ancient sanctuary subsisted.

It will perhaps be replied—Are we then to renounce the notion of the typical nature of sacrificial rites? and, in contradiction to the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, assert that they bore no reference to the great propitiation? Nothing is more foreign from the purpose of these remarks.

That the ceremonial law was a prefiguration of good things to

come, and owed its validity and efficacy entirely to the analogy which it bore to the *true sacrifice*, is placed beyond all reasonable controversy. All that is contended for is, that the reference which it bore was not understood during the subsistence of that economy ; that it is not to be considered as an interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement, so much as a sort of temporary substitute for that discovery ; and that it was a system of cyphers, or symbols, the true interpretation of which was reserved to a future period. It is no more essential to the existence of a type, that its import be understood before it is verified, than it is essential to prophecy that its just interpretation be comprehended before it is fulfilled. If we consider the benefit derived to the ancient church, from prophecy in its strictest sense, we shall find it consisted not in making men prophets, or enabling them to foretell future events, but rather in maintaining high and consolatory views of the providence and the attributes of God, accompanied with a firm but humble assurance of his gracious interposition in their concerns.

A general expectation of the Messiah's advent, as of some glorious and divine personage, who would bestow the highest spiritual and temporal felicity, without descending to details, or foreseeing the *precise method* by which his interposition was to become effectual, appears to have nearly bounded the views of such as "waited for the consolation of Israel." Thus vague and general, at least, were the expectations of the faithful at the time of his appearance ; to suppose they were ever materially different, is a gratuitous supposition, totally devoid of proof.

In discussing this point, it is expedient to distinguish betwixt the *fact* and the *doctrine* of the atonement. The aspect of the atonement of Christ, considered as a *transaction*, is towards God ; considered as a *doctrine*, towards man. Viewed in the former light, its operation is essential, unchangeable, eternal ; "He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Considered in the latter, its operation is moral, and therefore subject to all the varieties incident to human nature. The cross, considered as the meritorious basis of acceptance, the only real satisfaction for sin, is the centre around which all the purposes of mercy to fallen man have continued to revolve ; fixed and determined in the council of God, it operated as the grand consideration in the Divine Mind, on which salvation was awarded to penitent believers in the earliest ages, as it will continue to operate in the same manner to the latest boundaries of time. Hence it is manifest that this great transaction could admit of no substitute. But that discovery of it, which constitutes the *doctrine* of the atonement, though highly important, is not of equal necessity. Its moral impression, its beneficial effects on the mind, were capable of being

secured by the institution of sacrifice, though in an inferior degree ; while the offender, by confessing his sins over the head of the victim, which he afterwards slew, distinctly recognized his guilt, his just exposure to destruction, and his exclusive reliance on divine mercy.

By such elements of penitential sorrow and humble submission, accompanied with a general expectation of a Messiah, devout worshippers were prepared for the reception of the sublimer mysteries of the gospel ; and thus “ the law became a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ.”

When St. Paul asserts that the same law was a shadow of “ good things to come, and not the very image of those things,” he clearly intimates an essential difference between the two economies, and that the Mosaic did not afford that acquaintance with the method of pardon and reconciliation, which constitutes the distinguishing glory of the gospel. But if the Levitical sacrifices instructed the pious Jew in the doctrine of vicarious atonement as it is now exhibited, they were already possessed of the substance, and the law could with no propriety be styled a schoolmaster intended to lead *them* to Christ, who had already arrived thither.

The passage to which we have already adverted, which affirms that the way into the Holiest of all was not made manifest during the continuance of the first tabernacle, merits attentive consideration. From this and other similar passages, many of the Fathers were led to infer that the souls of departed saints were not immediately received at death into the beatific vision, but waited for their future crowns till the general resurrection, while some of them were permitted to accompany our Saviour at his ascension, as trophies of his victory over the last enemy. As this is a notion which, it is probable, few at present will be disposed to embrace, so it was the necessary result of interpreting the words in too absolute a sense, and of transferring to the *objects themselves*, what may with more propriety be referred to the *conception* entertained of those objects. Chrysostom paraphrases the text by remarking that the way into the Holiest, or into Heaven, was (*αβαρος*) inaccessible ; St. Paul merely affirms that it was not made manifest. Distinct from these two interpretations it seems impossible to find a third ; the words must either intend that the way itself was not opened, or that the knowledge of it was not communicated, which is equivalent to asserting that the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ was reserved to be developed in a future day.

If the justice of these observations be admitted, the situation of Jewish believers will appear indeed to have been far removed from that of Christians ; and the gospel dispensation will derive a

prodigious accession of splendor from the comparison. It will be seen that they were "shut up," to use the language of inspiration, unto the faith to be revealed; that their state was comparatively gloomy, though not hopeless; and that they were upheld by general assurances of divine mercy, confirmed by the acceptance of their offerings; while they possessed no clear and distinct conception of the way in which it would be displayed, or by what expedient its exercise could be rendered consistent with the immutable holiness and justice of the divine nature.

Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbras.

Led by a way that they knew not, the obscurity with which they were surrounded must often have dismayed them; while the perturbations of conscience, on every recurrence of guilt, would clothe the last enemy with new terrors, and deepen the shades which invest the sepulchre. Hence arose that language of despondency uttered by Hezekiah, David, and others in the prospect of dissolution, together with the gloomy pictures which they frequently draw of the regions beyond the grave, natural to such as were "all their life, through fear of death, subject to bondage." Exposed to danger from which they knew no definite mode of escape, and placed on the confines of an eternity, feebly and faintly illuminated, they had no other resource besides an *implicit* confidence in mysterious mercy.

But notwithstanding the extreme imperfection of their views, inasmuch as they *cordially* embraced the promises of God in the proportion in which they were then propounded, and cherished the expectation of a great Deliverer in the person of the Messiah, they possessed the spirit of faith. Genuine faith, considered as a principle, is characterized not so much by the particular truths which it embraces, as by its origin, its nature, and its effects. When St. Paul describes the faith by which the elders obtained a good report, he refers not to the mysteries of the gospel, but specifies the persuasion that the worlds were made, or created, by the word of God, in opposition to the opinion that they were formed out of pre-existent matter, which universally prevailed in pagan philosophy; he also enumerates among its legitimate objects the belief "that God is, and that he is the rewarder of such as diligently seek him;" and whoever examines with attention the various examples which he adduces of the operation of that principle, must be convinced that the idea of a vicarious propitiation is not absolutely essential to its nature, however necessary to salvation it has become, in consequence of the clear revelation of that doctrine.

Here then in all probability, consists the peculiar glory of the gospel, in contradistinction from the economy of Moses, that it de-

ciphers the figures of the law, accomplishes and absorbs every purpose of its sacrifices, and dispels the obscurity which concealed eternal realities, by placing in a refulgent light that great mystery, hid from ages and generations, "by which God can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." Thus the rigor and reserve which under the ancient economy generated a spirit of bondage, is exchanged for the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But it is time to return from this digression, which, though not totally irrelevant to the subject, has diverted the author's attention longer than he intended from the writer of the *Plea*.

III. In my former treatise the omission of the name of Christ in the baptism of John was urged in proof of its being distinct from the Christian ordinance; on the contrary, in the total absence of scriptural evidence, my opponent contends that he not only baptized in the name of Jesus, but also in that of the Holy Trinity. Supposing such to have been the fact, upon what principle can we account for the silence of the sacred writer, on so important a particular? for that it was important, and would have contributed more to elucidate the nature and extent of his mission than all the circumstances combined, which they have thought fit to record, will scarcely be denied. What similar example occurs in the whole series of Scripture history, of a minute and detailed account of a religious ceremony, in which the mention of its most essential feature is suppressed? or who will believe that while the minutest particulars respecting John were deemed worthy of being recorded, one so remarkable and unprecedented as that of his baptizing in the name of the Trinity was too trivial to be mentioned? a circumstance of much greater moment, surely, than his subsisting on locusts, or his being clothed with a girdle. But beside the silence of Scripture, which might of itself be deemed sufficiently decisive, the inconsistency of such a proceeding, with the known reserve our Lord uniformly maintained respecting his Messiahship, and his repeated charges to his disciples not to publish that fact, demonstrate the extreme improbability of his suffering himself to become the avowed object of a religious rite. The employment of his name for *such* a purpose, it is obvious, was equivalent to a public declaration of his being the Messiah, and must have defeated his known intention. In the publication *On Terms of Communion*, this argument was repeatedly insisted on, and pursued to such an extent of illustration that we should have supposed it impossible it could either be misunderstood or misrepresented. What is the reply of the author of the *Plea* to this argument? One of the most extraordinary in the annals of controversy. It is neither more nor less than this, that "though our Lord

frequently enjoined secrecy as to the dignity of his divine character, and the immediate object of his mission, there is not a single instance in which he manifested any delicacy as to his name.”* He afterwards proceeds to tell us, with great gravity, that his name Jesus was as well known as that of Peter or John; and that he was addressed under that name equally by friends, enemies, and strangers. My reluctance to inflame this controversy with the language of exacerbation reduces me, on this occasion, to a perplexity how to express myself. Is it possible, let me ask, he could so far mistake the scope and bearing of the reasoning as to confound the use of the term Jesus, as the proper name, by which he was addressed in the ordinary intercourse of life, with the employment of it with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost, in a holy sacrament? Or will he contend that to call a person by the name of Jesus, or by any other appellation whatever, is precisely the same thing as to baptize in his name? He who is capable of confounding things so essentially distinct, is beyond the reach of reasoning; and if he did not confound them, but wished to put the charge upon his readers, from a despair of being able to answer the argument, he has evinced a want of candor and good faith that merits the severest animadversion. Had his publication been a tissue of nonsense and stupidity throughout, we should have been strongly inclined to the former supposition; but when we reflect on the shrewdness which it occasionally displays, joined to his care not to glance in the slightest manner to the true hinge of the controversy, it is difficult not to suspect the latter. It may be questioned whether another person could have been found, acquainted with the English language, but would have instantly perceived that it was not the author’s intention to insinuate a reluctance in our Lord to divulge his name, but the *fact* of his being the Messiah; and that it was the inseparable connection of that fact, with the practice of baptizing in his name, which was the ground of my objection. As he has not made the slightest attempt to solve the difficulty, it would be trifling with the patience of the reader to attempt to reinforce it.

IV. The different effects which accompanied baptism, when performed by the Apostles, and by John, were urged as a decisive proof that the two baptisms were essentially distinct, and characteristic of separate economies. To such a distinction our attention is invited by the Forerunner, who affirmed himself to baptize in water only, but that he that came after him should baptize in the Holy Ghost, and in fire. To this the author of the *Plea* replies, by remarking, “that the argument proceeds on incorrect

* *Plea for Primitive Communion*, p. 27.

data ; it appears to assume that water-baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, are the same ; or that the latter invariably followed the former. It will no doubt be regarded as a remarkable incident, that in the midst of a zealous effort to separate between what is substantially the same, an attempt should be made to identify what is essentially different.”*

After describing the baptism of the Holy Ghost as an effect which ordinarily accompanied immersion in the name of Christ, it will be deemed much more remarkable that the author should be accused of confounding them, or that he should be affirmed to have *identified* two things which stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect. If it be a fact that the communication of the Spirit usually accompanied the administration of baptism in the apostolic age, while no such communication was annexed to the ceremony of John, the author's position is correct. In proof of this fact, we have only to consult the Acts of the Apostles, which record the history of the first promulgation of the gospel. We there perceive that St. Peter held out the promise of the Spirit to the people, as a principal inducement to submit to the baptismal sacrament ; and that when St. Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus, who, though baptized, had not heard of those supernatural endowments, he expressed his surprise, saying, “ Into what then were ye baptized ? ” a question totally irrelevant, but upon the supposition that the reception of miraculous gifts was the stated appendage to that ordinance.

The only inquiry which can possibly arise on this subject is, whether John, in foretelling that the Messiah should baptize with the Holy Ghost, intended to allude to the sacramental water, or whether his attention was directed solely to the effusion of the Spirit, without reference to the external rite. This question, however, admits of easy decision, when we recollect that the corporeal rite was the usual preparative for the reception of spiritual gifts ; that they were announced in immediate connexion with the act of baptizing ; and that though the ancient Prophets almost universally foretold the abundant effusion of spiritual gifts and graces, which succeeded the advent of the Messiah, none before John made use of a figure, which, viewed apart from the visible action with which it was associated, would have been scarcely intelligible. His suppression of the mention of *water* is in perfect accordance with the genius of oriental speech, which in the exhibition of a complex object, is wont to represent it only by its boldest and most impressive feature.

It is not necessary to the support of this reasoning, to assert

* Plea for Primitive Communion, p. 29.

that the communication of miraculous gifts *invariably* accompanied baptism ; it is quite sufficient to account for the language of John, as well as to sustain the inference deduced from it, that such was the *stated* order. The instance of the Samaritans, recorded in the eighth of the Acts, is urged as an exception, but when attentively examined, it is none. We are informed, indeed, that though they were already baptized, the Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them ; not, however, because the gift of the Spirit did not usually accompany the administration of that rite, but because the Apostles, to whom alone the power of conferring it belonged, were not present. The case of the Apostles themselves, and of Cornelius, it is admitted, may be considered as exceptions. In the former instance the outward ceremony was superseded, as we apprehend, partly by the previous baptism of the Spirit, and partly by their having been converted to Christianity before the institution of that rite. In the latter, there was merely an inversion of the usual order ; the Spirit was given prior to the administration of baptism, instead of succeeding it ; but still they were closely conjoined in point of time, and sufficiently connected to justify the language of John.

To relieve the tediousness of the present discussion, let me here present the reader with a sample of the author's logic ; "If these supernatural effects," he triumphantly remarks, "are invariably to follow immersion in water, in order to demonstrate that this is really Christian baptism, how is it that they were copiously enjoyed by some who are supposed never to have received this institution?"* By an argument precisely similar, it were easy to demonstrate that the possession of reason is no essential ingredient in the constitution of human nature. For it might with equal propriety be urged, if such a principle enters necessarily into the definition of human nature, how is it that it is copiously enjoyed by beings (angels for example) who are supposed never to have received such a nature ? This reply may be deemed amply sufficient for such a mode of reasoning ; but in addition to this, let it be observed, that it was neither asserted nor insinuated, that miraculous gifts are invariably requisite to constitute Christian baptism ; but simply that the fact of their accompanying it, when performed by the Apostles, was held up by John as a striking feature in the new dispensation. And where is the absurdity of admitting that, without contending for its perpetuity, miraculous gifts sufficiently marked the *transition* from one economy to another ? or that it is a peculiarity worthy of mention among the characteristics of a period, denominated in distinction from every preceding one, the dispensation of the Spirit ?

* Plea for Primitive Communion, p. 30.

V. Apprehensive of fatiguing the attention of the reader, we hasten to the last particular connected with this branch of the controversy, which is the decisive proof of the truth of my hypothesis, resulting from the fact, that the disciples of John were *baptized* by St. Paul. As the author of the *Plea*, however, finds it necessary to contradict it, it will be proper to quote the whole passage, as it stands in the common translation, the accuracy of which no critic has impeached; "And it came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said he, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." (Acts 19: 1—6.) In examining this passage, with a view to the inquiry whether these men were baptized by St. Paul, or not, it is the fifth verse which especially claims our attention. The question turns entirely on the interpretation of the following words:—"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." These words must be understood either as the language of St. Paul, or of Luke the historian. Our opponents contend that they are to be understood as a continuance of St. Paul's address, in which he describes the nature and effects of John's baptism. Upon this interpretation, the passage last quoted has no relation to the disciples at Ephesus, except as it was intended for their instruction; it is descriptive not of what befel those disciples, but of the general submission of the Jewish people to the rite administered by John. And as it is asserted in the next verse that St. Paul laid his hands upon *them*, and they received the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, we are led to a most extraordinary paradox, the assertion that St. Paul actually laid his hands not on the persons mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph, but on that part of the Jewish people at large, who had been baptized by John, to whom he also communicated prophetic gifts. But as this proposition is too hard even for the powerful digestion of our opponents, they are compelled to adopt another expedient, which is to separate the relative pronouns in the last verse, and refer them, not to their immediate antecedent, but to a very remote one, at the distance of several verses. The only apology they make for this strange perversion

of the language of inspiration is, that such interruptions of continuity are not uncommon; whereas we challenge them to produce a single instance of such a construction, not merely in the New Testament, but in the whole compass of Greek literature. Examples may possibly be adduced, where the relative pronoun is connected with an antecedent equally remote, but none most assuredly where its relation to an immediate antecedent is so obvious and so natural, that the true interpretation, in opposition to that which presents itself at first sight, becomes a perfect enigma. Were there difficulties arising on each side, we might be induced to acquiesce in a construction, which however unnatural, or unusual, suggested the only consistent sense; but to have recourse to such a contrivance, merely to avoid that construction which is recommended by every rule of grammar, and against which not a shadow of objection lies, except its repugnance to hypothesis, is a proceeding at which liberal criticism must blush. If such a mode of expounding Scripture were adopted on other occasions, it is difficult to say what absurdity might not be obtruded on the sacred volume. The manner in which the author of the *Plea* criticises the passage, is such as might be expected from the advocate of so hopeless a cause. He neither ventures to quote it, nor to make the slightest remark on its principal clauses; but contents himself with putting a speech into the mouth of St. Paul, in which every thing runs perfectly smooth and easy; and since it is much easier to make speeches than to elucidate difficulties, or establish paradoxes, we commend his policy. His only remaining effort is confined to the introduction of a parallel passage; but unfortunately it turns out that his pretended parallel affords an example of as plain and obvious a construction of words as is to be found in the sacred pages. It is a passage which instead of presenting a choice of difficulties, difficulties of *his* kind I mean, where grammar is on one side, and hypothesis on the other, suggests a sense in which all mankind have acquiesced—a sense which no degree of stupidity can miss, or artifice evade.* The only resemblance it bears to the portion of history under consideration is, that it relates a similar incident, where certain persons who had been baptized had not yet received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. To attempt the defence of a most unnatural interpretation of Greek words, not by an appeal

* This wonder-working passage is as follows:—"Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—*Acts* 8: 14—17.

to a passage which exhibits a similar peculiarity of construction, but merely a similarity of occurrence, is egregious trifling.

To the argument founded on the extreme improbability that none of the numerous converts on the day of Pentecost were previously disciples of John, no reply is attempted.

I cannot dismiss this subject without noticing the extreme deficiency of information respecting the history of religious opinions this author evinces, when he stigmatizes the sentiments advanced, as a modern theory. They are so far from meriting that reproach, that they boast the suffrages of all the Fathers without exception, who have touched upon the subject ; nor would it be easy to discover a single divine previous to the Reformation, by whom they were not embraced ; and since that period they have received the sanction of a Grotius, a Hammond, a Whitby, a Doddridge, a Chillingworth, and a multitude of other names of nearly equal celebrity. On an accurate inquiry, it will probably be found that the absurd interpretation of the passage we have just been considering, which is so necessary to the support of the opposite hypothesis, originated in the horror excited at the conduct of the Anabaptists at Munster, by which certain divines of the Reformation felt themselves strongly disposed to shun whatever might bear the semblance or color of Anabaptism ; that, in short, the doctrine here advanced is the revival of an ancient, rather than the invention of a new opinion.

To the sincere inquirer the antiquity or the novelty of a doctrine will appear a consideration of little moment, compared to the evidence by which it is supported ; yet as a natural prejudice exists against violent departures from the ancient course of interpretation, it is but just to endeavor as much as possible to disengage the cause of truth from this incumbrance.

The author of the *Plea* expresses a sort of horror at the thought of a plurality of baptisms, forgetting, it should seem, that the doctrine of *baptisms* in the plural number is placed by St. Paul amongst the first principles of the oracles of God. It is difficult to conceive to what baptisms he could refer, except those which are the subject of the present discussion ; the baptism of the Spirit, which was the highest gift of God, could with little propriety be termed a doctrine, much less enumerated amongst the first principles of Christianity ; and the Jewish washings constituted no part of that system.

Having presented the reasons on which the baptism of John was affirmed to be essentially distinct from the Christian ordinance at so much length, it is high time to relieve the attention of the reader, by dismissing the subject.

There is one more observation, and one only, to which the au-

thor requests his attention. If we admit that the Jewish people were baptized in the name of Christ, considering the prodigious multitudes who repaired to John for that purpose, the conduct of a great part of that nation must be viewed in a new light; and instead of being chargeable with a uniform rejection of the Messiah, they must be considered as *apostates*; upon this supposition they violated the most sacred engagements, and impiously crucified their Prince, after consecrating themselves to his service by the most awful solemnities. The Evangelist informs us that "he came to his own, but his own received him not;" but the most accurate statement would have been, that they first received, and afterwards rejected him; received him on the testimony of the Forerunner, and rejected him after witnessing the immaculate purity of his life, the wisdom of his discourses, and the splendor of his miracles.

There is attached to apostacy a character of perfidy and baseness peculiar to itself, a species of guilt which the inspired writers frequently paint in the darkest colors, yet, strange to tell! though they had no motives to conceal or palliate the conduct of their countrymen in their treatment of the Messiah, but many motives to the contrary, not a syllable escapes them of the charge of apostacy. What terrible energy would that accusation have lent to St. Peter's address; what unspeakable advantage for alarming their consciences would he have derived from reminding them of their baptismal vows, and of their unspeakable impiety in crucifying the divine person to whom they had previously dedicated themselves in solemn rites of religion. When St. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, gives loose to one of his finest bursts of indignant feeling and rapid eloquence, in a brief portraiture of the character of his countrymen, the circumstance which would have given incredible force to the picture is suppressed; and not having perused the author of the *Plea*, he seems to entertain no suspicion of their having been baptized in the name of Jesus. It is not less unaccountable that the ancient Prophets contain no allusion to this event, but describe the future rejection of the Messiah as coeval with his appearance; and that the most singular fact in sacred history, is neither the subject of narration, nor of prophecy, but was reserved for the detection of the nineteenth century.

Having replied to this anonymous writer on every particular connected with the baptism of John, it is unnecessary to trouble the reader, by animadverting on the other parts of his performance; the few observations it contains which are pertinent to the subject, are too loose and superficial to deserve attention, especially since a work is announced by a writer who will probably discuss the remaining topics with superior ability. We shall notice

only two circumstances illustrative of the author's management of the controversy. He devotes his first section to a synopsis of the principles advanced in the treatise *On Terms of Communion*; which he has extended to the number of fourteen. Several of these, disguised by a little variety of language, are identically the same; some grossly misrepresented; and all of them expressed, not in the terms of the author, but in such as are adapted to give them as much of the air of paradox as possible. It is obvious that he who wishes to judge of them fairly, must view them in their proper place, accompanied with their respective proofs and illustrations; and that to tear them from their connexion, and exhibit them in a naked form, though they had been expressed in the author's own terms, is a direct appeal to prejudice. The obvious design is to deter the reader at the outset, and to dispose him to prejudge the cause before it is heard. To mingle in the course of a controversy insinuations and innuendos which have no other tendency than to impair the impartiality of the reader, is too common an artifice; but such an open, barefaced appeal to popular prejudice is of rare occurrence. It is an expedient to which no man will condescend, who is conscious of possessing superior resources. To this part of his performance no reply will be expected; for though the author feels himself fully equal to the task of answering his opponent, he confesses himself quite at a loss to answer himself. Like a certain animal in the eastern part of the world, who is reported to be extremely fond of climbing a tree for that purpose, he merely pelts the author with his own produce.

Another charge, however, is adduced of more serious import. For presuming to speak of conditions of salvation, he is accused of employing anti-evangelical language, and suspicions of his orthodoxy are pretty broadly insinuated. When the term *conditions* of salvation, or words of similar import, are employed, he wishes it once for all to be clearly understood that he utterly disclaims the notion of *meritorious* conditions, and that he intends by that term only what is necessary in the established order of means, a *sine qua non*, that without which another thing cannot take place. When thus defined, to deny there are conditions of salvation, is not to approach to Antinomianism merely, it is to fall into the gulf. It is nothing less than a repeal of all the sanctions of revelation, of all the principles of moral government. Let the idea of *conditional* salvation, in the sense already explained, be steadily rejected along with the term, and the patrons of the worst of heresies will have nothing further to demand. That repentance, faith, and their fruits in a holy life, supposing life to be continued, are essential prerequisites to eternal happiness, is a doctrine inscribed as with a sunbeam on every page of revelation; and must

we, in deference to the propagators of an epidemic pestilence, be doomed to express by obscure and feeble circumlocutions a truth which one word will convey, especially when that word, or others of a precisely similar meaning, has been current in the productions of unquestionable orthodoxy and piety, in every age? The author is at a loss to conceive on what principle, or for what reason, dangerous concessions are due to Antinomianism; that thick-skinned monster of the ooze and the mire, which no weapon can pierce, no discipline can tame. If it be replied, why adhere to an offensive term, when its meaning may be expressed in other words, or at least by a more circuitous mode of expression? the obvious answer is, that words and ideas are closely associated, and that though ideas give birth to terms, appropriate terms become in their turn the surest safeguard of ideas, insomuch that a truth which is never announced but in a circuitous and circumlocutory form, will either have no hold, or a very feeble one, on the public mind. The anxiety with which the precise, the appropriate term is avoided, bespeaks a shrinking, a timidity, a distrust with relation to the idea conveyed by it, which will be interpreted as equivalent to its disavowal. While Antinomianism is making such rapid strides through the land, and has already convulsed and disorganized so many of our churches, it is not the season for half measures; danger is to be repelled by intrepid resistance, by stern defiance—not by compliances and concessions; it is to be opposed, if opposed successfully, by a return to the wholesome dialect of purer times. Such is the intimate alliance betwixt words and things, that the solicitude with which the term *condition*, and others of similar import, have been avoided by some excellent men, has contributed more than a little to the growth of this wide-spreading pestilence. As almost every age of the church is marked by its appropriate visitation of error, so little penetration is requisite to perceive that Antinomianism is the epidemic malady of the present, and that it is an evil of gigantic size, and deadly malignity. It is qualified for mischief by the very properties which might seem to render it merely an object of contempt—its vulgarity of conception, its paucity of ideas, its determined hostility to taste, science, and letters. It includes within a compass which every head can contain, and every tongue can utter, a system which cancels every moral tie, consigns the whole human race to the extremes of presumption or despair, erects religion on the ruins of morality, and imparts to the dregs of stupidity all the powers of the most active poison. The author will ever feel himself honored by whatever censures he may incur, through his determined opposition to such a system.

A
REPLY

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH KINGHORN :

BEING

A FURTHER VINDICATION OF THE PRACTICE

OF

FREE COMMUNION.

PREFACE.

AFTER announcing an intention of replying to Mr. Kinghorn, the Public seem entitled to some account of the causes which have delayed its execution so long. Various conjectures have probably arisen on the subject. By many, no doubt, it has been suspected that the delay was occasioned by a perception of the difficulty of constructing an answer which would be deemed satisfactory, and that the engagement to reply was made, without anticipating so formidable an opposition. That the Author was, to a certain extent, deterred by a feeling of difficulty, it is impossible to deny ; but the reader is probably not aware in what the difficulty lay. It had no relation to the argumentative force of Mr. Kinghorn's production, in whatever degree it may be supposed to possess that attribute ; but solely to the manner in which he has chosen to conduct the debate. The perpetual recurrence of the same matter, the paucity of distinct and intelligible topics of argument, together with an obvious want of coherence, and of dependence of one part on another, give to the whole the air of a series of skirmishing and desultory attacks, rather than of regular combat, rendering it difficult to impart that order and continuity to a reply, in the absence of which, argumentative discussions are insufferably tedious. With the eagerness of a professed pleader, he has availed himself of every topic which could afford the slightest color of support to his cause, with little scrupulosity apparently, respecting the soundness of the principles from which he argues. In a word, he has conducted his share of the warfare in a manner, which renders him more formidable from the irregularity and quickness of his movements, than from the steady pressure of his columns.

Though he has advanced some new, and as they appear to me, paradoxical positions, the space which they occupy is so small, compared to that which he has allotted to arguments and objections distinctly

noticed and replied to in my former treatise, that it seemed almost impracticable to answer the greater part of the work, without a frequent recurrence to what had been already advanced. But a writer is never more certain of disgusting, than when he is the echo of himself.

On these accounts, had my private conviction dictated the course which it seemed proper to pursue, the following work, instead of swelling to its present bulk, would have been limited to some short strictures on those parts of his reply in which my respectable opponent has quitted the track of his predecessors. But to this there were serious objections. In the estimation of multitudes, little qualified to appreciate the weight of an argument, to be brief and to be superficial are one and the same thing; no publication is admitted to be solidly answered, except the reply bears a certain proportion to it in size and extent; and whatever is not distinctly noticed and discussed, however irrelevant, or however trivial, is instantly proclaimed unanswerable. These considerations determined me rather to hazard the imputation of tediousness, than to attempt a very concise reply, which however cogent, would be construed by many into a tacit acknowledgement of my incapacity to combat the reasoning of my opponent. Having, therefore, only a choice of evils, and necessitated either to make a large demand on the patience of the reader, or to incur the suspicion of evading what could not be successfully encountered, I preferred the former; endeavoring at the same time to shun, as much as possible, a tiresome repetition of the same topics; with what success, the Public will determine.

The preceding remarks will explain one cause of delay; to which may be added, a strong disinclination to controversy; the want of a habit of composition; repeated attacks of illness at one period, and various avocations and engagements at another, too unimportant to be obtruded on the attention of the reader.

It may also be remarked, in extenuation of the charge of procrastination, that the subject is just as interesting and important as when the controversy commenced. The evil in which it originates is not local, nor of an ephemeral or transitory nature; it will continue to subsist, there is reason to fear, after the present generation is consigned to the dust; and even the delay may not be altogether without its advantages. Both parties will have had leisure to reflect, the reasoning on each side of the question time to settle, and to find its level in the public mind, undisturbed by that disposition extrava-

gantly to depreciate and to extol respectively, the performances it has given rise to, which almost invariably distinguishes the outset of a controversy. Whatever appears in the present stage, it is but justice to consider as the result of more matured observation and inquiry, compensating in pertinence and solidity, what it may want in vivacity and ardor.

It is remarkable that without any previous knowledge or concert, a discussion on the subject of communion commenced nearly at the same time on both sides the Atlantic; and the celebrated Dr. Mason, of New York, justly regarded as one of the brightest ornaments of the Western hemisphere, was exerting the energies of his most powerful mind, in establishing the fundamental position of the treatise *On Terms of Communion*, almost at the very moment that treatise appeared. A coincidence so rare, a movement so simultaneous, yet so unpremeditated, we cannot but look upon as a token for good, as an indication of the approach of that period, so ardently desired by every enlightened Christian, when genuine believers will again be of "one heart and of one mind." Let us hope that America, the land of freedom, where our pious ancestors found an asylum from the oppression of intolerance, will exert, under the auspices of such men as Dr. Mason, a powerful reaction on the parent state, and aid her emancipation from the relics of that pestilential evil, still cherished and retained in too many British churches.

Independent of other considerations, that invaluable person possesses one obvious advantage over the Author of the following performance. Disengaged from the spurious refinements and perplexing subtleties which arise from the subject of baptism, by which our opponents attempt to evade the application of his general principle, his movements are in consequence more free and unfettered, and his force operates in a more simple direction than is compatible with the state of the question as it respects the views of the Baptist denomination. He fearlessly spreads his sails to the winds, and triumphs on the elements which is congenial to the amplitude and grandeur of his mind. Mine is a coasting voyage, in which the Author feels himself necessitated to creep along the shore, and to comply with all its irregularities, in the midst of flats and shoals, and exposed to perpetual annoyance from the innumerable small craft which infest these shallow waters. The effect of the different situations in which we are placed, is to give a luminous simplicity to his mode of conducting the argument, which forms a striking contrast not only to

the tedious logomachies which I have been compelled to encounter,* but the manner in which I have attempted to confute them. It belongs to a Pascal, and perhaps to a few others of the same order of genius, to invest the severest logic with the charms of the most beautiful composition, and to render the most profound argumentation as entertaining as a romance. The Author makes no such pretension; having confined his endeavors to an attempt to establish his assertions by sufficient proof, and to expose the sophistry of his opponent, he must be allowed to remind his readers that no quality will be found more necessary than patience. Truth, as far as he knows himself, is his sole object; and if they are actuated by the same disposition, though they will find little to amuse, it is possible they may meet with something to instruct them.

It is surprising how little attention an inquiry into the principles which ought to regulate our intercourse with other denominations, (a question of considerable moment in whatever light it be viewed,) has excited. Though it has given birth to a few publications at very distant intervals, none, as far as my information extends, have produced any deep impression, or any extensive and permanent effects. On this subject a spirit of slumber seems to have oppressed our faculties, from which we have hardly ever completely awoken. From the appearance of Mr. Bunyan's treatise, entitled *Water Baptism no Bar to Communion*, to the publication of the celebrated Mr. Robinson, a whole century elapsed, with few or no efforts to check the progress of the prevailing system, which had gained so firm a footing previous to Mr. Booth's writing, that he felt no scruple in entitling his defence of that practice, *An Apology for the Baptists*. The majority appear to have carried it with so high a hand, that the few churches who ventured to depart from the established usage were very equivocally acknowledged to belong to the general body, and seem to have been content to purchase peace, at the price of silence and submission. The most virulent reproaches were cast upon the admirable Bunyan, during his own time, for presuming to break the yoke; and whoever impartially examines the spirit of Mr. Booth's Apology, will perceive that its venerable Author regards

* Though Dr. Mason was not led by the course of his argument to treat of the question of *mixed communion* in the usual import of that phrase, his general principle not only necessarily infers it, but I have the satisfaction of learning from his own lips his entire approbation of the doctrine advanced in *Terms of Communion*.

him, together with his coadjutors and successors much in the light of rebels and insurgents, or to use the mildest terms, as contumacious despisers of legitimate authority. Mr. Kinghorn in the same spirit, evinces an eagerness, at every turn, to dispute our title to be considered as complete Baptists. In short, whether it is to be ascribed to intimidation, or to some other cause, the fact is notorious, that the zeal evinced on the side of free communion, has hitherto borne no proportion to that which impels the advocates of the opposite system, whose treatment of their opponents, in most instances, bears no very remote resemblance to that which moderate Churchmen are accustomed to receive at the hands of their High Church brethren.

Another cause has probably co-operated towards the production of the same result. Some whose character commands the deepest respect, are known to deprecate the agitation of the present controversy from an apprehension of the injury the denomination may sustain, by the exposure of its intestine dissensions. For my own part, I am at a loss to conceive the grounds on which such a policy can be justified. Could the fact that we are at variance among ourselves on the subject under discussion, be concealed, something might be urged in favor of the prudence of such a measure, nothing certainly for its magnanimity. But since that is impossible, and whoever is acquainted with the state of the denomination, is aware of the diversity which subsists in the constitution of our churches in this particular, the true state of the question is, whether that article of the Apostle's Creed which asserts the *communion of saints*, is to be merged in an exclusive zeal for baptism, and its systematic violation, in our judgement at least, to remain unnoticed and unchecked, in deference to party feelings and interests. We are at a loss to conceive how the association of truth with error, is capable of benefiting the former; or how it can be eventually injured by an attempt (conducted in a Christian spirit) to dissolve an alliance, which resembles the junction of the living with the dead. While the preservation of peace is dear to us, the interests of truth are still more so; and we would fix our eyes on the order in which the attributes of that celestial wisdom are enumerated, which is "*first* pure, then peaceable.

Before closing this preface, I must be allowed to advert to a circumstance intimately connected with the eventual success of the cause in which I am embarked. It is the general practice of our churches, whatever may be the sentiments of the majority, to continue the practice of strict communion, in almost every instance,

where the opposite system is incapable of being introduced with a perfect unanimity ; in consequence of which, it frequently happens that the constitution of the church continues to sanction strict communion, while the sentiments of a vast majority of its members are decidedly in favor of a contrary system ; and in opposition to the usage which obtains on other occasions, the private sentiments of the few, are made to regulate and control the conduct of the many. Where, it may be asked, is the propriety, where the justice of such a mode of proceeding ? Whatever respect may be due to the conscientious though erroneous scruples of an upright mind, it is not easy to perceive why these should be permitted to prescribe to the better judgement of those whom *we* must necessarily consider as more enlightened.

As the majority, convinced as they are supposed to be, of the right of all genuine Christians to communion, must necessarily regard the dissentients as being in error, it deserves to be considered in what manner error ought to be treated. Ought it to be the object of toleration, or should it be invested with dominion ? Surely all it can reasonably claim, is the former ; but when in deference to it, the far greater part of a society refrain from acting agreeably to their avowed principles, and consent to withhold from another class of their fellow Christians, what they consider as their undoubted right, they cannot be said merely to tolerate the error in question ; no, they in reality place it on the throne—they prostrate themselves before it. Yet, strange as it may appear, such is at present the conduct of Baptist societies. While there remains the smallest scantling of members averse to open communion, the doors, in compliance with their scruples, continue shut, and Pædobaptist candidates, however excellent, or however numerous, are excluded.

Thus the intolerance of one class of Christians is not only indulged, but pampered and caressed, while the religious profession of another is treated as a nullity. The incongruity of this mode of proceeding is also extremely obvious in another view. The admission of members in our societies, it is well known, is determined by a majority of suffrages, where the minority is expected, and that most reasonably, quietly to acquiesce in the decision of the majority. But in the case under present consideration, where strict communion is practised in a church, the majority of whose members are of a contrary persuasion, the eligibility, not of an individual, but of a whole class of individuals, to an indefinite extent, is virtually de-

terminated by the judgement of the smaller, in opposition to the larger party.

The injustice of such an arrangement will perhaps be admitted ; but how, it will be asked, can it be remedied ? Would it be proper to exclude such as feel it impossible, with a good conscience, to commune with Pædobaptists, in order to make room for the latter ? Nothing is more remote from our intention. Without inflicting the slightest wound on those amiable and exemplary persons who scruple the lawfulness of that measure, the remedy appears equally simple and obvious.

Whenever there is a decided majority in a church, whose views are in unison with those which we are attempting to recommend, let them throw down the barriers, and admit pious Pædobaptists without hesitation ; and let those whose principles deter them from joining in such a communion, receive the Lord's Supper apart, retaining at the same time, all their rights and privileges unimpaired. By this simple expedient, the views of all the parties will be met ; the majority will exert their prerogative, and act consistently with their avowed principles ; the Pædobaptists will obtain their rights ; and the abettors of strict communion will enjoy that state of separation and seclusion which they covet. By this means a silent revolution may be effected in our churches, unstained by a particle of violence, or of injustice. But while the present plan is pursued, while we are waiting for the last sands of intolerance to run out, the domination of error and injustice may be prolonged to an interminable period, since of all creatures, bigotry is the most tenacious of life.

Sudden and violent reformations are not only seldom lasting, but the mischief which results, and the disgust they excite, often produce a reaction, which confirms and perpetuates the evil they attempt to eradicate. For this reason, great prudence and moderation are requisite in every effort to meliorate the state of public bodies. He who aspires to remove their prejudices, must treat them with tenderness and respect, urging them to no step, for which they are not fully prepared, by a mature and widely extended conviction of its propriety ; for no innovations, however desirable in themselves, will be permanently beneficial, the stability and perpetuity of which is not guaranteed by the previous illumination of those by whom they are adopted.

Having devoted more time and attention to the present contro-

versy already than many are disposed to think it entitled to, it is by no means my intention to renew it, conceiving it a contemptible ambition to determine to have the last word, which is nothing less than to aspire at a pre-eminence in pertinacity. Resting with perfect confidence on the truth, and consequently on the ultimate triumph of the principles which I have attempted to defend, the detection of incidental mistakes, and the exposure of minor errors, will not disturb my repose, however justly they may awaken a feeling of regret, that the powers of the advocate were not more commensurate with the merits of the cause.

If the author has been, on any occasion, betrayed in the ardor of debate, into language which the reader may deem disrespectful to his opponent, it will give him real concern. He knows none whose character entitles him to higher esteem; nor is he insensible to the value of those expressions of personal regard with which Mr. Kinghorn has honored him, nor of that general mildness and urbanity, which is at once the character of his mind, and of his performance. Aware of the tendency of controversy to alienate the parties from each other who engage in it, it is matter of regret on that account, and on that only, that it was my lot to meet with an antagonist in Mr. Kinghorn. In every other respect, it is a fortunate circumstance for the cause of truth; for while his temper affords a security from that virulence, and those personalities, which are the opprobrium of theological debate, his talents ensure his doing justice to his cause, perhaps beyond any other person of the same persuasion. A very different performance in many respects was anticipated, it is true; nor could the extraordinary assertions, not to say adventurous paradoxes he has hazarded, fail to excite surprise; although his character exempts him from the suspicion of that arrogance and conceit in which they usually originate. They are rather to be ascribed to a dissatisfaction (which he dares not pretend to conceal) with former apologists; and a determination, if possible, to compass the same object by a different route. The intelligent reader will probably be of opinion, that he has attempted to give an air of originality to what was not susceptible of it; and that aiming to enrich and support a most meagre and barren thesis, by new arguments, he is reduced to the same necessity as the Israelites, of "making bricks without straw."

Having already made the porch too large for the building, one additional remark only is submitted to the attention of the reader,

previous to his entrance on the following discussion. The little success which has attended our exhibition of the doctrine of baptism, continued now for many generations, deserves the serious consideration of every intelligent Baptist. With all our efforts, with all the advantage of overwhelming evidence (as appears to me) in favor of our sentiments, the prospect of their reception, (to say nothing of established churches, where there are peculiar impediments to be encountered), the prospect of their reception by dissenting communities, is as distant as ever; and it may be doubted whether, since the recent revival of religion, our progress is in a fair proportion to that of other denominations. It may be possible to assign the second causes of this remarkable event; but as second causes are always subservient to the intentions of the first, it deserves our serious consideration, whether we are not laboring under the sensible frown of the great Head of the Church; and "is there not a cause?" A visible inferiority to other Christians in zeal and piety will scarcely be imputed; nor have we been left destitute of that competent measure of learning and talent, requisite to the support of our doctrines. The cause of our failure then is not to be looked for in that quarter. But though we have not "drank with the drunken," if we have unwittingly "beaten our fellow servants," by assuming a dominion over their conscience; if we have severed ourselves from the members of Christ, and under pretence of preserving the purity of Christian ordinances, violated the Christian spirit; if we have betrayed a lamentable want of that "love which is the fulfilling of the law," by denying a place in our churches to those who belong to the "church of the first-born," and straitening their avenue, till it has become narrower than the way to heaven; we may easily account for all that has followed, and have more occasion to be surprised at the compassionate Redeemer's bearing with our infirmities, than at his not bestowing a signal blessing on our labors.



PART I.

THE FUNDAMENTAL POSITION ; OR, THE SUPPOSED NECESSARY
CONNEXION BETWEEN THE TWO POSITIVE INSTITUTES OF
CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED.

CHAPTER I.

Remarks on Mr. Kinghorn's statement of the Controversy.

PERFECTLY concurring in opinion with Mr. Kinghorn, that it is of importance that the point in debate be fairly stated, a few remarks designed to show in what respects his statement is inaccurate, or defective, will not be deemed irrelevant. He justly observes that the question, and the only question, is whether those who are *acknowledged to be unbaptized ought to come to the Lord's table*. After stating the sentiments of the Pædobaptists, he proceeds to observe that the "Baptists act on a different plan ; they think that baptism ought to be administered to those only who profess repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ; and that it should be administered to them on such profession by immersion. And then, and not before, they consider such persons properly qualified, according to the New Testament, for the reception of the Lord's supper." The last position Mr. Kinghorn is aware is not maintained by the Baptists as such, but by part of them only ; it may be doubted whether it be the sentiment of the majority. Why then identify the advocates of strict communion with the body, as though the abettors of a contrary practice were too inconsiderable to be mentioned, or were not entitled to be considered as Baptists ?

It is but just however to remark, that this disposition to enlarge the number of his partizans, is not peculiar to this writer. Mr. Booth, when engaged in defending a thesis, about which the Bap-

tists had long been divided, chose, in the same spirit, to denominate his performance "An Apology for the Baptists."*

Our Author proceeds to observe, "Here arises a controversy between the two parties, not only respecting baptism, but also respecting their conduct to each other on the subject of communion." Where, let me ask, are the traces to be found of this imaginary controversy betwixt Baptists and Pædobaptists on that subject? That they have been often engaged in acrimonious disputes with each other on the point of baptism, is certain; but of the history of this strange debate about terms of communion, the public are totally ignorant. What are the names of the parties engaged, and to what publications did it give birth? This author had informed us at the distance of a few lines, that the Pædobaptists in general believe that none ought to come to the Lord's table who are not baptized. If this is correct, we may indeed easily conceive of their being offended with us for deeming them unbaptized; but how our refusal to admit them to communion should become the subject of debate, is utterly mysterious. Did they, in contradiction to the fundamental laws of reasoning, attempt to persuade us to act in contradiction to the principles agreed upon by both parties? The supposition is impossible. The truth is—nor could the writer be ignorant of it—that the dispute respecting communion existed in our own denomination, and in that only.

An attempt is made to represent the advocates of mixed communion as divided among themselves, and as resting the vindication of their conduct on opposite grounds. In stating their views, Mr. Kinghorn observes, "that as their Pædobaptist brethren think themselves baptized, they are willing to admit them on that ground, since they do not object to baptism itself, but only differ from others in the circumstances of the ordinance."

"Some," he adds, "lay down a still wider principle, that baptism has no connexion with church communion; and that in forming a Christian church, the question ought not to be, are these Christians who wish to unite in church-fellowship *baptized*, whatever that term is considered as meaning—but are they, as far as we can judge, real Christians." ("Baptism a Term of Communion," p. 11, 12.)

Of this diversity in the mode of defending our practice, the writer of these pages confesses himself totally ignorant; and whatever prejudices our cause may sustain, it has not yet been injured by that which results from intestine dissension. Different modes of expression may have been adopted by different writers,

* Who would expect to find that a book entitled "An Apology for the Baptists," chiefly consists of a severe reprehension of the principles and practices of a respectable part of that body?

but a perfect accordance of principle, a coincidence in the reasons alleged for our practice, has pervaded our apologies. We have not, like our opponents, professed to take new ground;* we have not constructed defences so totally dissimilar as the publications of a Booth and a Kinghorn, where the argument which is placed in the very front by the former, is by the latter abandoned as untenable. It is easy to perceive that the alleged disagreement in our principles is a mere phantom. While we universally maintain the nullity of infant baptism, the persuasion which our Pædobaptist brethren entertain of their being baptized, can never be mistaken for baptism, and they, consequently, cannot be received in the character of baptized persons. Our constant practice of administering immersion to such, on a change of sentiment, would on that supposition convict us at once of being Anabaptists. It is not then under any idea that they have really partaken of that ordinance, more than the people called Quakers, that we admit them to our communion; but in the character of sincere though mistaken Christians, who have evinced even with respect to the particular in which we deem them erroneous, no disposition to treat a Christian rite with levity or neglect; and if there are those who would refuse to commune with such as reject the ordinance altogether, it is because they suspect them of such a disposition. As there can be no degrees in nothing, they are not so weak as to suppose that one class is in reality more *baptized* than the other; but one is supposed to mistake the nature of an institute, which the other avowedly neglects. In this case, he who is prepared to believe that the omission of Christian baptism, from a notion of its not being designed for perpetuity, may consist with that deference to divine authority which is essential to a Christian, will receive both without hesitation; he who is incapable of extending his candor so far, will make a distinction; he will admit the Pædobaptist, while he rejects the person who purposely omits the ceremony altogether. Whichever measure we adopt, we act on the same principle, and merely apply it with more or less extent, according to the comprehension of our charity. If we supposed there were a necessary, unalterable connexion between the two positive Christian institutes, so that none were qualified for communion who had not been previously baptized, we could not hesitate for a moment respecting the refusal of Pædobaptists, without renouncing the principles of our denomination. On the other hand, if among such as are supposed to be equally unbaptized, we admit some

* "The reader who is acquainted with the '*Apology for the Baptists*,' written by the late venerable Abraham Booth, will find that in the following pages I have taken ground somewhat different from his. I have adopted rather a different mode of defence."—*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 8.

and reject others, this difference must be derived, not from the consideration of baptism, but of personal character; in other words, from our supposing ourselves to possess that evidence of the piety of the party accepted, which is deficient in the other. Hence it is manifest, that nothing can be more simple and intelligible than the principles on which we proceed, which are of such a nature as to preclude every other diversity of opinion, except what regards their application in particular instances.

He who mistakes the nature of a positive institute, is in a different predicament of error from him who avowedly rejects it altogether; the imperfection which claims toleration in our Pædobaptist brethren, is different in its nature from that which attaches to such as are disposed to set the ordinance aside. It is very possible therefore, that some may be willing to extend their indulgence to what appears to them the *least* of two errors, while they refuse toleration to the greater, and on this ground admit a Pædobaptist, while they scruple to receive him who does not even profess to be baptized. But in making such a distinction, no intelligent Baptist would be moved by the consideration of one of these parties being baptized, and the other not, (for this would be admitting the validity of infant baptism,) but solely by the different estimate he made of the magnitude of the respective errors. Some would probably consider each of them consistent with a credible profession of Christianity; others might form a less favorable judgement. In this case the parties would act differently, while they maintained the same principle, and adjusted their practice by the same rule.*

* The above remarks may enable the reader to judge of the justice with which Mr. Kinghorn asserts or insinuates our total disagreement respecting the fundamental principle on which we justify our practice. "Among the Baptists," he says, "who plead for mixed communion, I apprehend few will be found who would fairly take Mr. Hall's principle in all its consequences. In general they palliate, and plead that many good men think themselves baptized, and they are willing to accept them on that footing, leaving it to their own consciences to decide whether they had received such baptism as the word of God required; and they will hardly admit the possibility of any case occurring which should require their acting on a wider principle. And here also, as far as my knowledge and observation have extended, I believe the cases are *very few* in which the position would be fairly and boldly adopted, that Christian communion ought to be held with those who deny altogether the obligation to attend to Christian baptism."—p. 15. My opportunities of knowing the sentiments of the liberal part of the Baptists must be supposed to be at least equal to Mr. Kinghorn's; yet I have not heard a single objection from them against the general principle. Exceptions have been made (as might be expected) to particular parts, but none whatever to the fundamental position of the treatise. The reason he assigns for supposing that many would not adopt the general principle in its full extent, is inconclusive. To refuse the communion of such as denied the obligation of baptism altogether, providing that error was deemed of such magnitude as to induce a suspicion of the piety of the party, would not be to contradict the principle in the smallest degree; and I am persuaded that amongst the advocates of mixed communion the refusal would proceed on no other ground. It is one thing to reject a general principle, and another to differ about the application of it to particular cases.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that, after stating the principle on which my Treatise on Communion was founded, Mr. Kinghorn makes his first appeal to the Pædobaptists, and asks whether they are prepared to acknowledge that baptism and the Lord's supper have no connexion. To what purpose is a question referred to a class of persons, who as far as concerns the interior regulation of their churches, have no interest in the inquiry ; on whose practice it can have no influence, and who are supposed by both the parties concerned, to be in an error respecting the institution itself, which has given occasion to the discussion. The confidence with which he anticipates their favorable suffrage, appears however to be ill founded ; and if the Evangelical Magazine for 1803 is supposed to have insinuated sentiments congenial with his own, the author of the review of the present controversy in the same publication, distinctly and explicitly expressed his approbation of the treatise "On Terms of Communion." I have no doubt the result of an accurate and extensive inquiry into the prevailing sentiments of such as adhere to infant baptism would be found opposed to his doctrine ; and that such of them as might object to the admission of a member avowedly unbaptized, would be actuated by the consideration of the *magnitude of the error*, and not by the conviction of a specific and essential connexion betwixt the two ordinances in question. In other words, they would decide on the case upon principles common to the advocates of mixed communion.

His pretence for calling in such a host of disputants is that he may "clear the field," which in my humble opinion will be best accomplished by confining the debate within its proper limits ; regarding it agreeably to its true nature, as a controversy which concerns our own denomination alone, without attempting to extort a verdict from persons who have not been placed in a situation to invite their attention to the subject. Fortunately for them, they are under no temptation to treat their fellow-Christians with indignity ; whether they would have maintained the stern inflexibility which is prepared to sacrifice the communion of saints, to an unfounded hypothesis, must be left to conjecture. We indulge a hope that they would have hesitated long ere they admitted a doctrine which draws after it such consequences, that they would have judged of the tree by its fruits, and have discovered some better mode of signalizing their allegiance to Christ, than by the excision of his members. The tenet to which we are opposed, produces an effect so contrary to what the genius of the gospel teaches us to anticipate, and so repugnant to the noblest feelings of the heart, as to form a presumption against it which nothing can surmount, but the utmost force and splendor of evidence. How far it is from possessing such support, or even that preponderation in the scale of ar-

gument which would produce conviction on the most trivial subject, it is the business of the following sheets to inquire.

In deciding the question whether persons whom we deem unbaptized are entitled to approach the Lord's table, we must examine the connexion subsisting betwixt the two positive ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Our opponents contend that there *is such a connexion* betwixt these as renders them inseparable; so that he who is deemed unbaptized, is *ipso facto*, apart from any consideration whatever of the cause of that omission, disqualified for approaching the sacred elements. *We* contend that the absence of baptism may disqualify, and that it does disqualify, wherever it appears to proceed from a criminal motive; that is, wherever its neglect is accompanied with a conviction of its divine authority. In this case we consider the piety of such a person at least as doubtful; but when the omission proceeds from involuntary prejudice, or mistake, when the party evinces his conscientious adherence to known duty, by the general tenor of his conduct; we do not consider the mere absence of baptism as a sufficient bar to communion. On this ground we cheerfully receive pious Pædobaptists, not from the supposition that the ceremony which they underwent in their infancy, possesses the smallest validity, but as sincere followers of Christ; and for my own part, I should feel as little hesitation in admitting such as deny the perpetuity of baptism, whenever the evidence of their piety is equally clear and decisive.

It is apparent that the whole controversy turns on the *connexion* betwixt the two positive institutes; and that in order to justify the conduct of our opponents, it is not sufficient to evince the authority or perpetuity of each, and the consequent obligation of attending to both; it is necessary to shew the dependance of one upon the other; not merely that they are both clearly and unequivocally enjoined, but that the one is prescribed with a *view to the other*.

There are two methods by which we may suppose this to be effected; either by shewing their inherent and intrinsic dependence, or by making it appear that they are connected by *positive law*. Betwixt ritual observances, it is seldom, if ever, possible to discover an inherent connexion; in the present case it will probably not be attempted. If the advocates of exclusive communion succeed, it must be in the last of these methods; it must be by proving from express declarations of Scripture, that baptism is an invariable and essential prerequisite to communion. A Jew would have found no difficulty in establishing this fact respecting circumcision and the passover; he would have immediately pointed to the book of Exodus, where we find an express prohibition of an uncircumcised person from partaking of the paschal

lamb. Let some similar evidence be adduced on the present subject ; let some declaration from Scripture be exhibited which distinctly prohibits the celebration of the Lord's supper by any person who, from a misconception of its nature, has omitted the baptismal ceremony, and the controversy will be at rest. The reader can scarcely be too often reminded that this is the very hinge of the present debate, which (as appears from the title of his pamphlet) Mr. Fuller clearly perceived, however unsuccessful he may have been in establishing that fundamental position. Much that Mr. Kinghorn has advanced will be found to be totally irrelevant to the inquiry in hand ; and in more instances than one, the intelligent reader will perceive him to have made concessions which are destructive of his cause. But let us proceed to a careful investigation of the arguments by which he attempts to establish the aforesaid *connexion*.

CHAP. II.

His attempt to establish the connexion contended for, from the apostolic commission and primitive precedent.

My respectable opponent commences this branch of the argument by quoting the apostolic commission, justly remarking that whatever may be thought of John's baptism, the ceremony enjoined in that commission must belong, in the strictest sense, to the Christian dispensation. The commission is as follows :—"Go, therefore, and teach all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28: 19, 20. Or as it is recorded in Luke—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." "This," Mr. Kinghorn observes, "is the *law* ; the Acts of the Apostles are a commentary on that law ; not leaving us to collect from mere precedents what ought to be done, but shewing us how the law was practically explained by those who perfectly understood it." He reminds us "that in every instance where the history descends to particulars, we find they constantly adhered to this rule ; and that when they *taught* and men believed, the Apostles *baptized* them, and then farther instructed them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

We are as ready to allow as Mr. Kinghorn, that baptism was enjoined by the apostolic commission; we are perfectly agreed with him respecting the *law* of baptism, and are accustomed to explain its nature, and enforce its authority by the same arguments as he himself would employ. We have no controversy with him, or with his party, on the subject of baptism, considered apart from the Lord's supper; and were he disputing with such as deny its original appointment, or its perpetuity, the passages he quotes would be fully to his purpose. But where the inquiry turns, not on the nature or obligation of baptism, but on the *necessary dependence* of another institution upon it, we are at a loss to perceive in what manner the quotation applies to the question before us. To us it is inconceivable how any thing more is deducible from the *law* of baptism, than its present and perpetual obligation. The existence of a law establishes the obligation of a correspondent duty and nothing more. The utmost efforts of ingenuity can extort no other inference from it, than that a portion of blame attaches to such as have neglected to comply with it, variable in its degree by an infinity of circumstances, too subtle to be ascertained, and too numerous to be recited. We feel no hesitation in avowing our belief that Pædobaptists of all denominations have failed in a certain part of their duty; for this is a legitimate inference from the perpetuity of the baptismal ordinance, joined with our persuasion that we have interpreted it correctly. But if we are immediately to conclude from thence that they are disqualified for Christian communion, we must seek a church which consists of members who have failed in no branch of obedience; and must consequently despair of finding fit communicants apart from the spirits of just men made perfect. Examine the idea of *law* with the utmost rigor, turn it on all sides, and it will present nothing beyond the obligation to a certain species of conduct, so that if Pædobaptists are really disqualified for the Lord's supper, it must be for some other reason than their non-compliance with a *law*, or otherwise we must insist upon the refusal of every individual who has not discharged all his obligations. To expatiate on the distinctness and solemnity with which the baptismal ceremony was enjoined, is little less than trifling, in a debate with persons who fully accede to every part of the statement, and who wish to be informed, not whether our Pædobaptist brethren are in an error, but whether its moral amount, its specific nature, is such as to annul their claims to Christian communion. On this point, the passages adduced maintain a profound silence.

If the practice of strict communion derives no support from the *law* of baptism, it is impossible it should derive it from apostolical precedent; since the Apostles, as this author observes, adhered

constantly to the rule. They did neither more nor less than its letter enjoined ; consequently we must be mistaken if we imagine we can infer any thing from their practice, beyond what a just and fair interpretation of its terms would suggest. If the Acts of the Apostles are, as Mr. Kinghorn asserts, "a commentary on the law, shewing us how it was practically explained," it is impossible it should contain a tittle more than is found in the text. Let us see how the Apostles acted. "When they *taught* and men believed," says our Author, "the Apostles *baptized* them." Whom did they baptize ? Undoubtedly such, and such only, as were convinced, not merely of the truth of Christianity, but of the obligation of the particular rite to which they attended. This is precisely what we do. When we have reason to believe that any part of our hearers have received the truth in the love of it, we proceed to explain the nature, and to enforce the duty, of baptism ; and upon their expressing their conviction of its divine authority we baptize them. Such a previous conviction is necessary to render it a reasonable service. We administer that rite to every description of persons whom our opponents themselves deem qualified, and withhold it under no circumstances in which the Apostles would have practised it. Wherein then, as far as that institution is concerned, does our practice differ from that of the Apostles ? Our opponents will reply, that though in the administration of that rite, our conduct corresponds with the primitive pattern, yet it differs in this, that we receive the *unbaptized* to our communion, which was not done in the apostolic age. To this we reply, that at that period no good men entertained a doubt respecting its nature ; that it was impossible they should, while it was exemplified before their eyes in the practice of the Apostles and the Evangelists ; that he who refused to abide by the decision of inspired men, would necessarily have forfeited his claim to be considered as a Christian ; that a new state of things has arisen, in which, from a variety of causes, the doctrine of baptism has been involved in obscurity ; that some of the best of men put a different interpretation on the language of Scripture on this subject from ourselves ; and that it is great presumption to claim the same deference with the Apostles, and to treat those who differ from us on the sense of Scripture, as though they avowedly opposed themselves to apostolic authority. To misinterpret is surely not the same thing as wilfully to contradict ; and however confident we may be of the correctness of our own interpretation, to place such as are incapable of receiving it, on the same level with those who withstood the Apostles, differs little, if at all, from the claim of infallibility. We reason, as we conceive conclusively, in favor of adult, in opposition to infant baptism ; our Pædobaptist brethren

avow their inability to discern the justice of our conclusion; and are they on that account to be viewed in the same light as though they intentionally rejected the decision of inspired men? What is this but to set up a claim to inspiration, or at least to such an infallible guidance in the explanation of Scripture, as is equally exempt from the danger of error or mistake? If we examine it accurately, it amounts to more than a claim to infallibility; it implies in the Pædobaptists a knowledge of this extraordinary fact. The Apostles were not only inspired, and consequently infallible teachers, but were known and acknowledged to be such by the primitive Christians; and before we presume to demand an implicit acquiescence in our conclusions, and to consider ourselves entitled to treat dissentients as we suppose the opponents of the Apostles would have been treated, it behoves us to evince our possession of infallibility by similar evidence. As I have not heard of our opponents making such an attempt, I cannot sufficiently express my surprise at the loftiness of their pretensions, and the arrogance of their language. In their dialect all Christians besides themselves are "*opposed* to a divine command," (Booth), "refuse subjection to Christ, and violate the laws of his house." (Kingshorn.)

The justice of their proceeding, founded on the pretension of apostolical precedent, is perfectly congenial with its modesty. Upon the supposition that a professor of Christianity, in the times of the Apostles, had scrupled the admission of adult baptism, could he, we would ask, in the circumstances then existing, have been considered as a good man, or a genuine convert? The reply will unquestionably be, no. "He," said St. John, "who is of God heareth us; he who heareth not us, is not of God; hereby ye know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

In this case then, it is admitted that the simple fact of rejecting adult baptism would have been sufficient to set aside a pretension to the Christian character. Is it sufficient now? Are the Pædobaptists to be universally considered as bad men, or at least as persons whose Christianity is doubtful? Nothing more distant from the avowed sentiments of our opponents. Where then is the justice of classing together men of the most opposite descriptions; or of inferring, that because the Apostles would have refused communion to an unbaptized person, at a time when it is acknowledged that none but false professors could remain in that state, it is our duty to refuse it to some of the most excellent of the earth, merely on account of the absence of that ceremony? As it is admitted on all hands that baptism was then so circumstanced that the omission of it was inconsistent with a credible profession of piety, nothing more is necessary to account for the

precedent which includes it; it was the necessary result of the then state of things, and the Apostles, it is acknowledged, could not have extended their communion beyond the limits of that rite, without incorporating insincere professors. But if this reason is sufficient to account for it, it is unphilosophical and unreasonable to seek for another. The supposed inherent and inseparable connexion betwixt the two positive institutes, is another, and a totally different one, which is sufficiently excluded by the preceding reasoning.

We presume it will not be doubted that Scripture precedent is founded on wisdom, that it is not arbitrary and capricious. It would betray great irreverence to suppose that men acting under divine inspiration, were not in every branch of their official conduct, especially in whatever related to the regulation and government of the church, moved by the strongest reasons. Hence the inquiry why they acted as they did is essential to a rational investigation into the force and authority of Scripture precedent. Their proceedings were regulated by their judgement, or rather by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit which enlightened their minds, and directed their movements. If the *reason* for rejecting unbaptized persons in the primitive age applies to the case of Pædobaptists, the argument for strict communion derived from the practice of the Apostles, is unanswerable. But if the cases are totally dissimilar; if our opponents can assign no *such reason* for excluding their Christian brethren, as might justly have been urged against the admission of the unbaptized in the times of the Apostles, the argument is totally inconclusive.

It is decided by the express declaration of our Lord, that he who refuses obedience to any part of his will is not a Christian. "Then," saith he, "are ye my disciples if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." But while there was no diversity of opinion on the subject, the voluntary omission of the baptismal ceremony could arise from nothing but a contumacious contempt of a divine precept, of which no sincere Christian could be guilty. Here then we discover a sufficient reason for the matter of fact urged by our opponents, without supposing an intrinsic or invariable connexion betwixt the two ordinances. The principle of open communion would have compelled us to act precisely in the same manner as the Apostles did, had we been placed in their circumstances. How vain then the attempt to overthrow that principle, by appealing to a precedent which is its legitimate and necessary consequence; and how unreasonable the demand which urges us to treat two cases as exactly similar, of which our opponents, equally with ourselves, are compelled to form the most opposite judgement. Let the advocates of restricted communion express

the same opinion of the state and character of those whom they now regard as unbaptized, which we are certain they would feel no scruple in avowing with respect to such as had refused submission to that ordinance in primitive times, and we shall deplore their blindness and bigotry, but shall acknowledge they reason consistently from their own premises. But we will never submit to identify two cases which agree in nothing but the omission of an external rite, while that omission arises from causes the most dissimilar, and is combined with characters the most contrary. We will not conclude because the Apostles could not bear with those that were evil, they would have refused to tolerate the good ; or that they would have comprehended under the same censure, the contumacious opposer of their doctrines, and the myriads of holy men, whose only crime consists in mistaking their meaning in one particular.

The remarks we have already made will be deemed, we trust, a sufficient answer to the triumphant question of Mr. Kinghorn. "How is it," he asks, "that with the same rule for the guidance of the church, the ancient Christians could not receive a person to communion without baptism, if the modern both can, and ought to receive him?" ("Baptism a Term of Communion." p. 29.) The answer is obvious. If the ancient Christians had received a person without baptism, they would have received a false professor ; but when we at present receive one whom we judge to be in a similar predicament, we receive a sincere, though mistaken, brother ; we receive him who is of that description of Christians whom we are commanded to receive.

If it still be contended that the two cases are so parallel that the proceedings of the Apostles in this particular are binding as a law, we would once more ask such as adopt this plea, whether they themselves form the same judgement of the present Pædobaptists as the Apostles would have entertained of such as continued unbaptized in their day. If they reply in the affirmative, they must consider them as insincere, hypocritical professors. If they answer in the negative, since by their own confession they look upon the persons whom they exclude in a different light from that in which the party excluded by the Apostles was considered, what becomes of the identity of the two cases ; and what greater right have they to *think differently* of the state of the unbaptized from what the Apostles thought, than we have for treating them differently. They are clamorous in their charge against us of wilful deviation from apostolic precedents. But there are precedents of thinking as well as of acting, and it is as much our duty to conform to the *sentiments* of inspired men as to their actions. The chief use indeed which inspired precedents are of, is to assist

us to ascertain the dictates of inspiration. The conduct of enlightened, much more of inspired men, is founded on sound speculative principles. If the advocates of strict communion urge us with the inquiry—By what authority do you presume to receive a class of persons whom you acknowledge the Apostles would not have received? we reply—By what authority do you presume to deviate from the opinion of the Apostles respecting that same class? Many whom you exclude from your communion, as unbaptized, you acknowledge as Christians, and without hesitation express your confidence of meeting them in glory. Did the Apostles entertain the same judgement respecting such in their day? Were they prepared to recognize them as brethren, and to congratulate them on their eternal prospects, while they repelled them from communion? Would they not without hesitation, have applied to them the language which our Saviour uses, respecting such as refused to be baptized by John, whom he affirms to have “rejected the counsel of God against themselves?”

These questions admit but of one answer. Here then is a palpable disagreement between the sentiments of our opponents and those of the Apostles, on the subject of the unbaptized; the Apostles would have both rejected and condemned them; *they* reject them as members, and embrace them as brethren. Were they called upon to defend themselves from the charge of contradicting the Apostles, they would begin to *distinguish* betwixt the two cases, and urge the different circumstances which accompany the omission of the same ceremony now, from what must be supposed to have accompanied it in the times of the Apostles; in other words, they would attempt to shew that a new case has arisen, which necessitates them to form a correspondent judgement.—They assume the same liberty with ourselves of *thinking differently* of the state of the many who continue unbaptized in the present day, from what they are persuaded the Apostles would have thought of such as had remained in that situation in theirs; and yet with strange inconsistency accuse us of a deviation from a divine precedent in not treating them both in the same manner, forgetting that if the cases are parallel, they themselves are guilty of an avowed and palpable contradiction to the sentiments of the Apostles.

When men differ in their views of one and the same object, it will not be denied that they contradict each other. We offer them the alternative, either to deny, or to affirm, that to be unbaptized at present is in a moral view a very *distinct thing*, and involves very different consequences, from being in that predicament in the time of the Apostles. If they deny it, they stand self-convicted of contradicting the sentiments of inspiration, by speak-

ing of that class of persons as genuine Christians, whom they cannot but acknowledge the Apostles would have condemned. If they adopt the affirmative, our practice by their own confession is not opposed to apostolic precedent, because that precedent respects a *different thing*.

They not only depart from the precedent of the Apostles, in the judgement they form of the unbaptized, but in every other branch of their conduct, with the exception of the act of communion. On all other occasions they treat as brethren, and frequently, and that much to their honor, cultivate an intimate friendship with persons whom they deem to be destitute of that rite, the omission of which in the apostolic age, would have incurred the sentence of wilful impiety and disobedience. What, we ask, is more opposite to primitive precedent, than the practice of including the same persons within the obligations of Christian love and friendship, whom they prohibit from communion; of inviting them into the pulpit, and repelling them from the table; uniting with them in the most retired and elevated exercises of devotion, and excluding them from the church? It is scarcely in the power of imagination to feign a species of conduct more diametrically opposite to all the examples of Scripture; and when they have reconciled these, and many similar usages, with the practice of the primitive age, they will have supplied us with a sufficient apology for our pretended deviation from the same standard.

It will probably be thought enough has been already said to demonstrate the futility of the argument founded on original precedent; but as this is considered by our opponents in general, as well as by Mr. Kinghorn in particular, as the main prop of their cause, we must be permitted to detain the reader a little longer, while we enter on a closer examination of his reasoning.

In order to shew that baptism is a necessary term of communion, he labors hard to prove that it is a term of *profession*. "It is obvious," he says, "that their baptism (that of believers) was the term of professing their faith, by the special appointment of the Lord himself." To the same purpose, he afterwards adds, "the fact still exists that it pleased the Lord to make a visible and ritual observance, the appointed evidence of our believing on him. If obedience to a rite be not a term of salvation, (which no one supposes) yet it was ordered by the highest authority, as an evidence of our subjection to the Author of salvation; and a Christian profession is not made in *Christ's own way without it*." Recurring to the same topic, he observes, "Whatever may be the conditions of salvation, a plain question here occurs, which is, — *Ought the terms of Christian communion to be different from those of Christian profession?* The only answer which one

would think could be given to this question would be, no ; Christian communion must require *whatever the Lord required as a mark of Christian profession.*"

It is hoped the reader will excuse my accumulating quotations to the same purport, which would have been avoided, were it not evident that the writer considered this as his strong hold, to which he repairs with a confidence which bespeaks his conviction of its being impregnable. We will venture, however, to come close to these frowning battlements ; we will make trial of their strength, that it may be seen whether their power of resistance is equal to their formidable aspect. We freely acknowledge that if the *principle* can be established that baptism is *invariably* essential to a Christian profession, the cause we are pleading must be abandoned, being confident that a true profession of the Christian religion is inseparable from church communion.

Previous to entering on this discussion, it will be necessary to premise that the words *profession* and *confession*, together with their correlates, are usually denoted by one and the same word in the original, and that they are evidently used by the authors of the received translation as synonymous.* Hence whatever is affirmed in the New Testament respecting the *confession* of Christ, or of his sayings, may without hesitation be considered as predicated of a *profession* ; since whatever difference may subsist in the popular meaning of the words, whenever they occur in Scripture, they are merely different renderings of the same term.†

Now that the profession of Christ is an indispensable term of salvation, is so undeniably evident from the New Testament, that to attempt to prove it, seems like an insult on the understanding of the reader. I must crave his indulgence, however, for recalling to his recollection a very few passages, which will set the matter beyond dispute. "Whoever," said our Lord, "shall confess (or *profess*) my name before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven : and whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven."

* The word in the original is *ομολογια*, derived from *ομολογειω*, a verb of the same import.

† See Matthew 10: 32. Luke 12: 8. Matthew 7: 23. John 9: 22. John 12: 42. Acts 23: 8. Acts 24: 14. Romans 10: 9, 10. 1 John 4: 15. 2 John 7. Rev. 3: 5. 1 Timothy 6: 13. *την καλην ομολογιαν*, a good profession. English Translation.—Heb. 3: 1. *της ομολογιας ημων*, of our profession, E. T.—Heb. 4: 14. *της ομολογιας ημων*, our profession, E. T.—Heb. 10: 23. *την ομολογιαν της ελπιδος ακλινη*, the profession of our faith without wavering.—Matthew 7: 23. *τοτε ομολογησω αυτοις*, then will I profess unto them.—In each of the preceding passages the same word, under different inflections, is employed, and they contain all the passages which relate to the absolute necessity of a religious profession.

Mat. 8: 32. The same language occurs, with little variation, in the gospel of *St. Luke*, 12: 8. In these words we find an awful denunciation of the rejection of every one, without exception, who shall be found to have denied Christ; and as this denial is immediately opposed to *confessing* him, it must necessarily attach to all such as have not made a confession. If a medium could be supposed betwixt the denial and the open assertion of the doctrine of Christ, it is precluded by the following sentence; "Whoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and of the Father, and of his holy angels."—*Luke* 9: 26. Thence we may with certainty conclude that from whatever motives a profession of Christianity is omitted or declined, eternal perdition is the consequence. Nor is this the doctrine of the Evangelists only; it is repeatedly asserted, and uniformly implied, in the writings of the Apostles. "If thou shalt confess (or *profess*) with the mouth," saith *St. Paul*, "the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession (or *profession*) is made to salvation."—*Romans* 10: 9. We find the same writer on another occasion exhorting Christians to hold fast the *profession* of their faith without wavering, when the previous possession of that is necessarily supposed, a firm adherence to which is inculcated as essential to salvation. "Let us hold fast the *profession* of our faith without wavering."—*Hebrews* 10: 23. It is to the faithful, considered as such, without distinction of sects and parties, that *St. Paul* addresses the following exhortation: "Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our *profession*, Christ Jesus."—*Hebrews* 3: 1. In the Epistle to the Hebrews alone, the phrase *our profession* occurs three times, and in each instance in such a connexion as demonstrates it to be an attribute common to all Christians. (*Heb.* 3: 1. 4: 14. 10: 13.)

It would be trifling with the reader's patience, to multiply proofs of a position so evident from Scripture, as the inseparable connexion betwixt a genuine profession of Christ, and future salvation. But if this be admitted, what becomes of the principal argument urged by *Mr. Kinghorn* for strict communion, which turns on the principle, that "baptism is the term of Christian profession?" Who can fail to perceive that if this proposition is true, the Pædobaptists are on our principles cut off from the hope of eternal life, and salvation is confined to ourselves? The language of our Saviour and his Apostles is decisive respecting the necessity of a *profession* in order to eternal life; this writer affirms that baptism, as we practise it, is an essential term of profession. By comparing

these propositions together, a child will perceive that the necessary inference is the restriction of the hope of future happiness to members of our own denomination. This in truth is the conclusion to which all his reasoning tends ; it meets the intelligent reader at every turn ; but when he expects the writer to advance forward and press the fearful consequence, he turns aside, and is afraid to push his argument to its proper issue. He travails in birth, but dares not bring forth ; he shrinks from the sight of his own progeny. Sometimes he seems at the very point of disclosing the full tendency of his speculations, and more than once suggests hints in the form of questions which possess no meaning, but on the supposition of that dismal conclusion to which his hypothesis conducts him. Let the reader pause, and meditate on the following extraordinary passage :—"If baptism," he says, "was once necessary to communion, either it was then essential to salvation, or that which was *not* essential to salvation, *was* necessary to communion. If it was *then* essential to salvation, how can it be proved not to be essential now?" ("Baptism a Term of Communion," p. 19.) Again he asks, "What is the meaning of the term *condition*? In whatever sense the term can apply to the commission of our Lord, or to the declarations of the Apostles *respecting repentance, faith, and baptism* ; is not baptism a condition either of communion, or of salvation, or of both? Do the conditions either of salvation, or of communion, change by time? Are they annulled by being misunderstood?" ("Baptism a Term of Communion," p. 20.)

Whatever of argument these passages may be supposed to contain, will be examined hereafter ; the design of producing them at present, is to shew the tendency of the principle ; and the reader is requested to consider whether they are susceptible of any other sense, than that the terms of salvation and of communion are commensurate with each other ; that whatever was once essential to salvation, is so still ; and that baptism is as much a condition of salvation, as faith and repentance. But if these are his real sentiments, why not speak plainly, instead of "uttering parables ;" and why mingle in the same publication, representations totally repugnant, in which he speaks of such as dissent from him on the subject of baptism, as persons of the most distinguished character—persons whom God will undoubtedly bring to his kingdom and glory. ("Baptism a Term of Communion," p. 21. 36.) The only solution this problem admits, is to suppose (what my knowledge of his character confirms) that to the first part of these statements he was impelled by the current of his arguments ; to the latter by the dictates of his heart. But however that heart may rebel, he must learn either to subdue its contumacy, or con-

sent to relinquish the principal points of his defence. He has stated that the limits of communion must be the same with those of profession; that the Pædobaptists have none, or at least none that is valid; and that on *this* account, and for *this* reason, they are precluded from a title to Christian fellowship. But the word of God, as we have seen, repeatedly insists on men's professing Christ, as an indispensable requisite to salvation. How is it possible then, if Mr. Kinghorn's position is just, to evade the consequence, that those whom he would exclude from communion, are excluded from salvation?

"If obedience to a *rite*," he observes, "be not a term of salvation, (which no one supposes) yet it was ordered by the highest authority, as an evidence of our subjection to the Author of salvation; and a Christian profession is not made in Christ's *own way without it*. ("Baptism a Term of Communion," p. 18.) If the open acknowledgement of Christ by the Pædobaptists is not to be esteemed a *real* and *valid* profession, the inevitable consequence is, for reasons sufficiently explained, that they cannot be saved; but if it is *valid*, (however imperfect in one particular) it is so far made in Christ's *own way*. The expression which he employs to depreciate it, has either no meaning, or none that is relative to the object of the writer. The scope of his argument obliged him to prove that adult baptism is essential to a Christian *profession*; he now contents himself with saying, that without that ordinance, it is not made in the right way, which may with equal propriety be affirmed of every deviation from the doctrine and precepts of the gospel. Just as far as we suppose a person to depart from these, we must judge his profession not to be made in *Christ's own way*: nor will any thing short of a *perfect* profession, or in other words, a perfect comprehension, and exhibition of the will of Christ, exempt him from such an imputation; so that in this sense, which is the only one applicable to the case before us, to make a profession of the Christian religion in *Christ's own way*, is not the lot of a mortal. But though this is the only interpretation consistent with truth, we cannot for a moment suppose that such was the meaning of the writer. He must have intended to assert that the parties to whom they are applied, fail to make what *Christ himself* would deem a profession. This supposition is forced upon us by the scope of his reasoning, which went to prove that baptism is necessary to communion, *because* it is necessary to a profession. This supposed necessity must consequently relate, not to its *completeness*, or *perfection*, but to its *essence*; he must be understood to affirm, that they have not exhibited, what Christ will consider as a profession. But as *he* has solemnly affirmed his determination to reject such as are des-

titute of it, we ask again how Mr. Kinghorn will reconcile this with the salvability of Pædobaptists?

Whatever it seems good to Infinite Wisdom to prescribe as an indispensable condition of future happiness, we must suppose that it exactly corresponds to its name; it is true and genuine in its kind, and wants nothing which constitutes the essence. If an open acknowledgement of Christ is the prerequisite demanded under the title of a profession, it would seem strange to assert that something less than what is correctly denoted by that expression, is after all sufficient to satisfy the condition. This however is what Mr. Kinghorn must assert, to be consistent with himself; for he will not deny that the advocates of infant sprinkling have exhibited something *like a profession*; but as they have not made it in *Christ's own way*, it is not, strictly speaking, entitled to that appellation, and consequently cannot claim the privileges it secures. But if the case is as he states it, he must either confine the hope of salvation to his own party, or admit that in the solemn denunciations before recited, it is not *really* a profession of Christ which is required, but merely something which resembles it. Whether the use of language so replete with ambiguity, or collusion, is consistent with the character of the "true and faithful witness," we leave to the decision of the reader. According to Mr. Kinghorn, while there are two modes of avowing our Christianity, one so essentially defective as not to deserve the name of a *profession*, the other sound and valid, when the Supreme Legislator thought fit to enjoin the profession of his name, under the sanction of eternal death, he intended to insist on the first, in distinction from the last of these methods. Let him who is able, digest these absurdities; from which, whoever would escape, must either abandon the ground which Mr. Kinghorn has taken, or consign the Pædobaptists to destruction.

It is time however to recur to the questions with which he has urged his opponents, and which he supposes it impossible to solve on my principles. "If baptism," he observes, "was *once* necessary to communion, either it was then essential to salvation, or that which was *not* essential to salvation was necessary to communion. If it was *then* essential to salvation, how can it be proved not to be *essential* now? If it be argued that it was not essential to salvation *then*, it must either be proved that communion was held without it, or Mr. Hall's position must fall." ("Baptism a Term of Communion." p. 19.)

Of the preceding dilemma, I embrace without hesitation, the affirmative side, and assert that in the apostolic age, baptism *was* necessary to salvation. To the query which follows, "how then can it be proved that it is not essential now," I reply that it is un-

necessary to attempt it, because it is admitted by Mr. Kinghorn himself; and it is preposterous to attempt the proof of what is acknowledged by both parties. It is very astonishing, after he had so clearly avowed his conviction of the exalted character, and unquestionable piety of many Pædobaptists, he should ask the question; but he was probably so dazzled with the seeming subtlety and acumen of these pointed interrogatories, as not to perceive their total irrelevance. If he feels any hesitation in affirming that baptism was essential to salvation in primitive times, he entertains a lower idea of its importance than his opponents; but on the contrary supposition, unless he totally retracts his liberal concessions, he must acknowledge that which was *once* necessary to salvation is not so now. The difficulty attending the supposition of a change in the terms of salvation, is urged with little propriety by one to whose hypothesis they apply in their full force; nor are they, when fairly examined, at all formidable. Owing to the incurable ambiguity of language, many truths founded on the clearest evidence, assume an appearance of paradox; and of this nature is the proposition which affirms that the terms of salvation are not unalterable; which may with equal propriety be affirmed or denied, in different senses. Since the *fundamental laws* of the kingdom of God are of equal and invariable obligation, a cordial compliance with which is essential to eternal felicity—since faith and repentance are at all times, and in all places, indispensable prerequisites to a justified state; in popular language there would be no impropriety in asserting that the conditions of salvation, under the gospel, remain the same from age to age.

But if this proposition is taken in its utmost rigor, and applied to every particular, connected with the faith and practice of Christians, it is manifestly false. There are certain parts of Christianity, which as they exhibit the basis, and propound the conditions of the new covenant, belong to its essence; certain doctrines which are revealed because they are necessary; and others which are necessary only because they are revealed; the absence of which impairs its beauty, without destroying its being. Of this nature are its few and simple ceremonies. But while this distinction is admitted, it will not be denied that the wilful perversion of the least of Christ's precepts, or the deliberate and voluntary rejection of his instructions in the smallest instance, would betray an insincerity utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. "He who shall break the least of these my commandments, and teach men so, he shall be of no account in the kingdom of Heaven." (Campbell's Translation.) The truth or precept in question may be of such an order, that a simple ignorance of it may not be fatal, yet to resist it, *knowing* it to be of divine authority, would be

pregnant with the highest danger. The great Head of the Church will not permit us to set voluntary limits to our obedience ; we must consent to receive all his sayings, or none. But it must be manifest on reflection, that on its first publication, the visible *ap-pendages* of Christianity were exhibited with a lustre of evidence, which no honest mind could withstand ; and that no pretence for their neglect could subsist among such as possessed religious integrity. Such was eminently the case with the two institutions which have occasioned the present controversy. The constant practice of the Apostles appealing to the senses of men, and illustrating the import of their oral instruction, made the point of duty so plain, that its omission in such circumstances could be ascribed only to voluntary corruption.

Nor is this the only example which might be adduced. By orthodox Christians the explicit belief of the doctrine of the Atonement is now considered as indispensably necessary to salvation ; but that the immediate followers of Christ were during his personal ministry so far from embracing this truth, that they could not endure the mention of his death, without expressing the utmost impatience, and knew not what was intended by his resurrection, is an undeniable fact. The full developement of the gospel scheme, made at a subsequent period, has in this instance rendered that essential to salvation, which could previously subsist without it.

It may also be observed, that a diversity of sentiment has arisen among Christians, from different modes of interpreting the word of God, which has given birth to various sects and parties, unknown in primitive times. On many of these points, it is impossible to suppose but that the sentiments of the inspired writers were expressed with sufficient perspicuity to be perfectly understood by the parties, to whom they were originally communicated ; and who having repeatedly attended their ministry, had heard those particulars more fully illustrated and confirmed, which are briefly touched upon in their writings. Who can doubt that the true idea of Election, whether it intends, as the Arminians assert, the distinction conferred on some, above others, in the collation of eternal benefits, or the pre-ordination of individuals to eternal life, was clearly ascertained by the primitive Christians, so as to exclude the possibility of controversy and debate. The Arminian will contend that the first Christians entertained his notion of election and grace ; the Calvinist, with equal confidence, will maintain that the true and primitive interpretation of Scripture is in favor of his hypothesis ; and neither of them can consistently admit that the members of the primitive church adopted a different system, from that which they respectively embrace. One of the

parties will contend that the apostolic church consisted entirely of Arminians; the other that it included none but Calvinists.

Were it allowed that *some* variety of opinion on this mysterious topic, might subsist even amongst the earliest converts, it is impossible to suppose there were none at that period who understood the doctrine of St. Paul; it would be most injurious to the reputation of that great writer, to suppose he expressed himself with an obscurity, which uniformly baffled the power of comprehension. Let his meaning, for argument's sake, be supposed to agree with the Arminian system, the adoption of that hypothesis was on this supposition essential to the salvation of him who was acquainted with that circumstance. For such a person to have embraced the Calvinistic sentiments, would have been to pour contempt on the apostolic doctrine, and to oppose his private judgement to the dictates of inspiration. If we invert the supposition, the result is a similar conclusion, in favor of the Calvinist. Were these parties to exclude each other from communion under pretence that the primitive Christians were all Calvinists, or all Arminians; were the Calvinist to assert that he dares not sanction so serious a departure from truth, as the denial of Election, and that to receive such as were erroneous in this point would be to admit a class of persons who had no existence in the primitive church, he would argue precisely in the same manner as Mr. Kinghorn. How would our author repel this reasoning, or justify a more liberal conduct? He certainly would not allege the original *obscurity* of the apostolic injunctions, and the possibility of primitive converts mistaking their meaning; he would unquestionably insist on the different degrees of importance attached to revealed truths, and the palpable difference betwixt mistaking the meaning, and avowedly opposing the sentiments of inspired writers. But this is precisely our mode of defence.

When a dispute arose on the obligation of extending the rite of circumcision to the Gentiles, a council consisting of the Apostles and Elders was assembled to determine the question. Their decision was, that the Gentiles should no longer be troubled on that head, but that they should be strictly enjoined among other things, carefully to abstain from things strangled, and from blood. It is universally acknowledged that it was the design of this injunction to prohibit the use of blood in food. This precept was enjoined expressly on the Gentiles, without the slightest intimation of its being of temporary duration; nor did it commence with the Jewish dispensation, but was in force from the period of the deluge. I have not the smallest doubt that it is of perpetual force, however little it may be regarded in modern practice; and were the observation of it proposed as a term of communion, I am not aware

of a single argument adduced by our opponents for their narrow, exclusive system, which might not with superior advantage be alleged in favor of such a regulation. If it be urged that there never was a period when it was not the duty of believers in Christ to be baptized, it may be asserted with equal confidence that the precept of abstaining from blood was invariably observed by the faithful from the time of Noah. If it be urged that the primitive church consisted exclusively of such as were baptized, it is equally certain that it consisted only of such as abstained from blood. That it was "once a term of communion" none will deny; "how then comes it to cease to be such?" In this case there is no room to allege a misapprehension of the meaning of the precept; it is susceptible but of one interpretation; and if the terms of communion are not "annulled by being misunderstood," (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 20.) much less when there is no such pretence. The only perceptible difference in the two cases, is that the precept respecting blood was not promulgated by the Saviour himself; but it resulted from the solemn and unanimous decision of his Apostles, and is of more ancient origin than any other Christian institute. If our opponents attempt to depreciate its importance by asserting that it is merely ritual and ceremonial, so is baptism; and as they were both enjoined by the same authority, both universally maintained in the primitive church, if the absence of one of these observances constitutes a church of *different materials*, so must the neglect of the other.

Such as violate the abstinence in question will not pretend that they observe the prohibition; they satisfy themselves with asserting their conviction, (a conviction not sustained by a syllable of Scripture) that it is only of temporary obligation; and as Pædobaptists profess their conscientious adherence to the baptismal precept, which they merely demand the right of interpreting for themselves, upon what principle is it that a mistake in the meaning of a positive injunction, is deemed more criminal than its avowed neglect; or why should an error of judgement which equally effects the practice in both cases, be tolerated in one, and made the ground of exclusion in the other? This reasoning, it is acknowledged, bears with the greatest weight on such as conceive the prohibition of blood to be still in force; who if they adopt the principle of Mr. Kinghorn ought, to be consistent, immediately to separate themselves from such as are of a contrary judgement. The same argument equally applies to laying on of hands after ordination and baptism. It is acknowledged that this rite was universally practised in the primitive times, that it claims the sanction of apostolic example, and it is enumerated by St. Paul amongst the *first principles* of Christian doctrine. Wherever that practice is

laid aside, it may with equal truth be affirmed, that the church consists of *different materials* from those admitted by the Apostles ; and it may be asked with an air of triumph, in the words of this writer, by what authority we presume "to make a scriptural rite of less consequence in the church of Christ than it was once." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 92.)

Thus much may suffice for the vindication of our pretended departure from ancient usage and apostolic precedent. But as this topic is supposed to include the very pith and marrow of my opponent's cause, the reader must excuse my replying to some other parts of his reasoning. Confident of the soundness of our principles, it is my anxious wish that nothing may pass unnoticed that wears the shadow of argument ; and that no suspicion be afforded of a desire to shrink from any part of the contest.

"If an obedience to a rite," says our author, "be not a term of salvation, (which no one supposes) yet it was ordered by the highest authority, as an *evidence* of subjection to the Author of salvation." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 18.) He repeatedly asserts that it was prescribed as an *evidence* of faith in him. In another place he styles it "the appointed *evidence* of our putting on Jesus Christ," and affirms that "the church of Christ acting upon the rule he has laid down, cannot recognize *any person* as his disciple who is not baptized in his name." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 140.)

Let us first ascertain the precise meaning of these remarkable passages. He cannot be supposed to assert that baptism is *of itself* a sufficient evidence of saving faith ; Simon Magus was baptized, who had no part or lot in the matter. His meaning must be, that the ordinance in question forms a necessary *part* of the evidence of faith, insomuch that in the absence of it, our Lord intended no other should be deemed valid. That this was the case in the primitive age, we feel no hesitation in affirming ; we have also shewn at large the reason on which that conclusion is founded. But in no part of Scripture is there the slightest intimation that it was more *specifically* intended as the test of faith, than compliance with any other part of the mind of Christ ; or that it was in *any other sense* an evidence of the existence of that attainment, than as it was necessary to evince the possession of Christian sincerity. Thus much we are most willing to concede, but are at a loss to know what is gained by it, unless our opponent could demonstrate that it occupies the same place at present, and that it is still necessary to constitute a valid evidence of faith in the Redeemer. If this is what he means to assert, (and nothing beside has the least relation to his argument) how will he reconcile it with the confidence he so often expresses of the piety of

the Pædobaptists? His objection to their communion, he elsewhere informs us, "does not arise from suspicions attaching to their Christian character," (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 67.) to which he trusts he is always willing to render ample justice. He has no suspicion of the piety of those who are destitute of that which Jesus Christ prescribed as *the evidence* of faith, and whom he affirms "it is impossible for the church, acting on the rule which he has laid down, to recognize as his disciples." I am at a loss to conceive of a more palpable contradiction.

If there be any meaning in terms, the word *evidence* means that, by which the truth of a fact or a proposition, is made manifest, and the absence of which induces either hesitation or denial. Its place in the intellectual world corresponds to light in the natural; and it is just as conceivable how an object can be beheld without light, as how a fact can be ascertained without evidence. Mr. Kinghorn it seems however has contrived to solve the problem; for while he affirms that the patrons of infant baptism are destitute of that which Infinite Wisdom has prescribed as the evidence of faith, and by which we are to recognize his disciples, he expresses as firm a conviction of their piety as though they possessed it in the utmost perfection. Let me ask, on what is his conviction founded. Will he say, upon evidence? But he assigns as a reason for refusing their fellowship, that they are destitute of that which Christ prescribed for that purpose. Will he distinguish betwixt that private evidence which satisfies his own mind, and the sort of evidence which Christ has demanded and enjoined? But what unheard-of presumption to oppose his private judgement to the dictates of Heaven; and while the Head of the Church has appointed the performance of a certain ceremony to be the invariable criterion of discipleship, to pretend in its absence, to ascertain it by another medium! To attempt to prove that every thing really is what God has appointed it, and that Infinite Wisdom where figurative language is excluded, calls things by their proper names, would be to insult the understanding of the reader. If compliance with adult baptism is in every age the appointed *evidence* of faith in Christ, it undoubtedly *is* what it pretends to be; and to ascribe faith to such as are destitute of it, is a sort of impiety.

"No church," he assures us, "acting agreeably to the rules of Christ, can recognize them as his disciples." (Baptism a Term of Communion p. 140.) What strange magic lies concealed in the word church! This writer in a multitude of places makes no scruple of avowing his attachment to the members of other denominations; he even anxiously guards against the supposition of his indulging a thought to the prejudice of their piety; and the senti-

ments which he entertains himself, he must be supposed to recommend to the adoption of his brethren. In his individual character, he feels no objection to *recognize* them to the full as Christians; nay, he expresses the sentiments of recognition in a studied variety of phrase; but the moment he conceives himself in a church, his tone is altered, and he feels himself compelled to treat them as strangers and foreigners. Why this contradiction betwixt the language of the individual, and the language of the church? If they *are* Christians, why should the knowledge of the fact be suppressed there? We are taught by St. Paul to consider the church as the pillar and ground of the truth; where she is supposed to exhibit as in a focus, the light and love which actuate her respective members; and instead of dissonance betwixt her public principles, and the private sentiments of her members, we naturally look for a perfect harmony, or rather for a more illustrious display of what every one thinks and feels apart; for a great and combined movement of charity, corresponding to her more silent and secret inspirations. But we are doomed to anticipate it in vain; for while the advocates of strict communion are shocked at the idea of suspecting the piety of their Pædobaptist brethren, they contend it would be criminal to recognize it in the church. What mysterious place is this, in which we are forbidden to acknowledge a truth proclaimed without scruple every where else; which possesses the property of darkening every object inclosed within its limits, and of rendering Christians invisible and impalpable to each other! In the broad day light of the world, notwithstanding their minor differences, they are recognized with facility; but the moment we enter the sombrous gloom of a Baptist church, we are lost from each others view; and like those who visited the cave of Trophonius, return pale, dejected, and bewildered. Of such societies we might be almost tempted to exclaim—"My soul, come not thou into their secret, and to their assembly be not thou united!" Shocked as we are at such illiberality, we suppress the emotions which naturally arise on the occasion, remembering (strange as it may seem) how often it is associated with talents the most respectable, and piety the most fervent.

CHAP. III.

The supposed necessary connexion betwixt the two positive institutes farther discussed, wherein other arguments are examined.

THE reader can scarcely be too often reminded that the present controversy turns *entirely* on the supposed necessary connexion betwixt the two positive Christian institutes; the recollection of which will at once convince him of the total *irrelevancy* of much which it has been customary to urge on the subject. Our opponents frequently reason in such a manner as would lead the reader to suppose we were aiming to set aside adult baptism. Thus they insist on the clearness with which it is enjoined and exemplified in the sacred volume; contend for its perpetuity, and represent us as depreciating its value, and dispensing with its obligation; topics which might be introduced with propriety in a dispute with the people called Quakers, or with the followers of Mr. Emlyn; but are perfectly irrelevant to the present inquiry. It surely requires but little attention to perceive that it is one thing to *tolerate*, and another to *sanction*; that to affirm that each of the positive rites of religion ought to be attended to, and that they are so *related*, that a mistake respecting one, instantly disqualifies for another, are not the same propositions. An attention to that distinction would have incredibly shortened the present debate; and shown the futility of much unmeaning declamation, and even of much unanswerable argument. We wish if possible to put an end to this *σκιωμαχία*, this fighting with shadows and beating the air; and to confine the discussion to the *real question*, which is, whether the two positive ordinances of the New Testament are so *related to each other*, either in the nature of things, or by express command, that he whom we deem not baptized, is, *ipso facto*, or from that circumstance alone, disqualified for an attendance at the Lord's table. This, and this only, is the question in which we are concerned.

That there is not a necessary *connexion* in the nature of things betwixt the two rites, appears from the slightest attention to their nature. It will not be pretended that the Lord's supper is *founded* on baptism, or that it recognizes a single circumstance belonging to it; nor will it be asserted to be a less reasonable service, or less capable of answering the design of its appointment, when attended to by a Pædobaptist, than by persons of our own persua-

sion. The event which it "shews forth" is one in which all denominations are equally interested ; the sacrifice which it exhibits, is an oblation, of whose benefits they equally partake ; and so little affinity does it bear to baptism, considered as a ceremony, that the most profound consideration of it will not suggest the idea of that rite. As far as reason is capable of investigating the matter, they appear *separate* ceremonies, no otherwise related, than as they emanate from the same source, and are prescribed to the same description of persons. In a word, judging from the reason of the case, we should not for a moment suspect that the obligation of commemorating the Saviour's death depended upon baptism ; we should ascribe it at once to the injunction—"Do this in remembrance of me." Since positive duties arise (to human apprehension at least) from the mere will of the legislator, and not from immutable relations, their nature forbids the attempt to establish their inherent and essential connexion. In the present case it is sufficient for us to know, that whatever God has thought fit to enjoin, must be matter of duty ; and it little becomes weak and finite mortals to limit its sphere, or explain away its obligation, by refined and subtle distinctions.

It remains to be considered whether the *necessary connexion* we are seeking, can be found in positive prescription. We, again and again, call upon our opponents to shew us the passage of Scripture which asserts that dependence of the Lord's supper on baptism, which their theory supposes ; and here when we ask for bread, they give us a stone. They quote Christ's commission to his Apostles, where there is not a word upon the subject, and which is so remote from establishing the essential *connexion* of the two ceremonies, that the mention of one of them only is included. They urge the conduct of the Apostles, though it is not only sufficiently accounted for on our principles, but is such as those *very principles* would, in their circumstances, have absolutely compelled us to adopt ; and surely that must be a very cogent proof that the Apostles were of their sentiments, which is derived from a matter of fact, which would undeniably have been just what it is, on the contrary supposition. They baptized, because they were commanded to do so ; they administered the Lord's supper, because our Saviour enjoined it on his disciples ; and both these duties were prescribed to the societies they formed, because the nature and obligation of each were equally and perfectly understood. What is there in this, we ask, which our hypothesis forbids us to imitate, or which had we been in their place, our views would not have obliged us to adopt ?

The late excellent Mr. Fuller, whose memory commands profound veneration, attempts in his posthumous tract on this subject,

to establish the connexion betwixt the two rites, by the joint allusion made to them in the Epistles of St. Paul. From their being *connected together* in his mind, on those occasions, he infers an inherent and essential connexion. With this view, he adduces the tenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, which asserts that the ancient Israelites had a figurative baptism "in the cloud, and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that rock which followed them and that rock was Christ." "If the Apostle," he remarks, "had not connected baptism and the Lord's supper together in his mind, how came he so pointedly to allude to them both in this passage?" He brings forward also another text to the same purpose, where St. Paul affirms we are all "baptized into one body, and are all made to drink into the same spirit." It is freely admitted that these, and perhaps other texts which might be adduced, afford examples of an allusion to the two ordinances at the same time, whence we may be certain that they were present together in the mind of the writer. But whoever considers the laws of association, must be aware how trivial a circumstance is sufficient to unite together in the mind, ideas of objects among which no essential relation subsists. The mere coincidence of time and place is abundantly sufficient for that purpose. In addressing a class of persons distinguished by the possession of peculiar privileges, what more natural than to combine them in a joint allusion, without intending to assert their relation or dependence; just as in addressing a British audience on a political occasion, the speaker may easily be supposed to remind them at the same time of their popular representation, of the liberty of the press, and the trial by jury, without meaning to affirm that they are incapable of being possessed apart. In fact the warmest advocates of *our* practice would feel no sort of difficulty in adopting the same style, in an epistle to a church which consisted only of Baptists; consequently nothing more can be inferred, than that the societies which St. Paul addressed were universally of that description; a fact we have already fully conceded. The only light in which it bears upon the subject is that which makes it perfectly coincide with the argument from primitive precedent, the futility of which has been sufficiently demonstrated.

The *unities* which the Apostle enumerates as belonging to Christians, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, are also set in opposition to us. "There is," saith he, "one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." That this text is irrelevant to the present argument, will appear from the following considerations. Since no

mention is made of the Lord's supper, it cannot be intended to confirm, or illustrate, the relation which baptism bears to that ordinance, which is the only point in dispute. Next, it is very uncertain whether the Apostle refers to water baptism, or to the baptism of the Spirit; but admitting that he intends the former, he asserts no more than we firmly believe, that there are not two or more valid baptisms under the Christian dispensation, but *one* only; a deviation from which, either with respect to the subject, or the mode, reduces it to a nullity. Lastly, since his avowed object in insisting upon these *unities*, was to persuade his reader to maintain inviolate that unity of the spirit, to which they were all subservient, it is extremely unreasonable to adduce this passage in defence of a practice which involves its subversion. "The same fountain," St. James tells us, "cannot send forth sweet waters and bitter:" but here we see an attempt to deduce discord from harmony; and to find an apology for dividing the mystical body of Christ, in the most pathetic persuasive to unity. The celebrated Whitby, a Pædobaptist and an Episcopalian, appears to have felt the full force of this admirable passage, when he deduces from it the three following propositions: 1st, "That sincere Christians only are truly members of that church catholic, of which Christ is the Head. 2dly, That nothing can join any professor of Christianity to this one body, but the participation of the spirit of Christ. 3dly, *That no error in judgement, or mistake in practice, which doth not tend to deprive a Christian of the spirit of Christ, can separate him from the church of Christ.*" (Whitby in loco.) Thus it is, that this learned commentator conceives himself to have discovered a demonstration of the principles we are abetting, in the very words our opponents urge for their overthrow.

Such is the substance of Mr. Fuller's argumentation on the subject; and on a basis so slight, did he attempt to rear the edifice of strict communion. In how different a light will he be viewed by posterity, as the victorious impugner of Socinian and Deistical impiety; and who on looking back on his achievements in that field, and comparing them with his feeble efforts in the present, but must exclaim with regret, *quantum mutatus ab illo!* Whether he felt some distrust of the ground he was treading, which for several reasons I strongly suspect; or whether it is to be ascribed to the infelicity of the subject, it is not easy to say; but his posthumous pamphlet on communion will unquestionably be considered as the feeblest of all his productions. The worthy Editor probably calculated on great effects to arise from the dying suffrage of a man so highly esteemed; but before he ventured on a step so injurious to his fame, he should have remembered that we live in an age not remarkably disposed to implicit faith, even in the greatest names.

But it is time to return to Mr. Kinghorn, with whose management of the subject we are at present more immediately concerned. As bold a polemic as Mr. Fuller was generally considered, he was pusillanimity itself compared to my present antagonist; who, in the ardor of combat, has not scrupled to remove landmarks which *he*, I am well persuaded, would have considered as sacred. It cannot be denied that he has infused by these means some novelty into the discussion, and that many of his arguments bear an original stamp; but whether that novelty is combined with truth, or that originality is such as will ultimately secure many imitators or admirers, is another question.

Having already shewn that no *inherent* connexion subsists betwixt the two *rites* under discussion, it remains to be considered, as we have already remarked, whether they are connected by *positive* law. Is there a single word in the New Testament, which, fairly interpreted, can be regarded as a *prohibition* of the admission of unbaptized persons to the Lord's supper?

Let Mr. Kinghorn answer this question for us: "*The New Testament*," he tells us, "*does not prohibit the unbaptized from receiving the Lord's supper*, because no circumstance arose which rendered such prohibition necessary." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 32.) Whether a prohibition was necessary, or not, involves a distinct inquiry; we request the reader's attention to the important concession, that *it does not exist*. The reason he assigns, however, for its not being necessary, is, that "it is acknowledged the law of baptism was clearly understood, and that the unbaptized could not be received into the church." "There was *therefore*," he adds, "no reason why a prohibitory declaration should exist." We fully agree with him, that at the period of which he is speaking, the law of baptism was fully understood; and *on that account*, we say, such as refused to obey it, could not be received into the church. We also admit that while there was this clear understanding, no such prohibition, as we demand, was requisite. But if it was rendered *unnecessary* because of this clear understanding, as this writer informs us, must it not by his own allowance become necessary, when that understanding ceases? If the presence of one thing *makes* another *unnecessary*, must not the absence of the same thing restore the necessity?

In the present instance the *only* reason he assigns for an express prohibition *not* being then necessary, is, that the ordinance of baptism was *perfectly understood*; surely if this be the *only* reason, the necessity must return when that reason ceases; in other words, there will be a necessity for an express prohibition of the unbaptized, whenever the precept respecting baptism, ceases to be understood. Has it, or has it not, ceased (in our apprehen-

sion) to be understood by modern Pædobaptists? If it be admitted that it has, then, on his own principle, an express prohibition of the unbaptized to receive the Lord's supper has become necessary. But he acknowledges none exists; whence the only conclusion to be deduced, is, either that the word of God has omitted what is necessary in itself, or (which is rather more probable) what is necessary to support *his hypothesis*. The word of God, it should be remembered, makes adequate provision for the direction of the faithful in every age, being written under the guidance of that Spirit, to whom the remotest futurity was present; and though it was by no means requisite to specify the errors, which were foreseen to arise, it is not a sufficient rule, unless it enables us to discover which of these are, and which are not, to be tolerated in the church. The doctrine which asserts that baptism is an indispensable requisite to communion, this writer expressly informs us was not promulgated to the primitive Christians, because they did not need it: their clear understanding of the nature of the ceremony, was sufficient of itself to secure an attention to it, in the *absence* of that doctrine. This is equivalent to an acknowledgement, if there be any meaning in terms, that if they had not had the clear comprehension of the ordinance which he ascribes to them, they would have needed that truth to be propounded, which in their situation was safely suppressed. But if the primitive Christians would have found such information necessary, how is it that the modern Pædobaptists, who are, according to our principles, precisely in the situation here supposed, can dispense with it? What should prevent them from turning upon Mr. Kinghorn, and saying, "We judge ourselves baptized; but supposing we are not, you assert that there is no scriptural prohibition of the unbaptized approaching the Lord's table, which you yet acknowledge would have been necessary to justify the repelling of primitive Christians from that privilege, had it not been for their perfect knowledge of the nature of baptism. But as you will not assert that *we* possess that knowledge, how will you defend yourself in treating us in a manner which, by your own concession, the Apostles would not have been justified in treating their immediate converts."

It was generally supposed that the abettors of strict communion imagined some *peculiar* connexion betwixt baptism and the Lord's supper beyond what subsists betwixt that ceremony, and other parts of Christianity. Our present opponent disclaims that notion. "If the above evidence," he says, "be justly stated, there is a real instituted connexion between baptism and the whole of the succeeding Christian profession. So that there is no reason why the connexion between baptism and the Lord's supper should

be more distinctly marked, than between baptism and any other duty or privilege." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 30.) But if this be the case, why do they confine their restriction to the mere act of communion at the Lord's table? In every other respect they feel no scruple in acknowledging the members of other denominations as Christians; they join with them in the most sacred duties; they interchange devotional services; they profess to value, and not unfrequently condescend to intreat, an interest in their prayers. In a word, no one who had not witnessed their commemoration of the Lord's supper, would suspect they made any distinction. There are a thousand acts which they perform towards such as practise infant sprinkling, which would be criminal and absurd on any other supposition, than that of their being members of Christ, and coheirs of eternal life. By the mouth of our author, whom they are proud of considering as their organ, they inform us that every other duty and privilege is as much dependent on baptism, as the celebration of the Eucharist; yet it is *this* duty and *this* privilege alone, in which they refuse to participate with Christians of other persuasions. How will they reconcile their practice and their theory; or rather, how escape the ridicule attached to such a glaring contradiction? The Sandemanian Baptists have taken care to shelter themselves from such animadversions, by a stern and consistent process of intolerance; but the English Baptists appear to resemble Ephraim, who mixed himself with the nations, and was a cake half turned. Is there no duty, is there no privilege, characteristic of a Christian, but what is included in receiving the sacrament? How is it that they have presumed to break down the sacred fence, to throw all open, and make all things common, with the exception of one narrow inclosure? What in the mean time becomes of apostolic practice, and ancient precedent? How admirably are these illustrated by their judicious selection of the Lord's table, as the spot over which to suspend the ensigns of party!

When we read of Priscilla and Aquila taking Apollos home, and instructing him in the way of the Lord more perfectly, we give full credit to the narrative; but had we been informed that these excellent persons, after hearing him with great delight, refused his admission to the supper of the Lord, on account of some diversity of opinion, or of practice; the consent of all the manuscripts and versions in the world, would have been insufficient to overcome the incredulity arising from an instantaneous conviction of its total repugnance to the maxims and principles of primitive Christianity. Yet this would have been nothing more than an anticipation of the practice of our opponents.

They attempt to justify themselves in this particular, on two

grounds ; first, that they “do nothing more than their opponents ;” and “where their conduct is deemed the most exceptionable, they only copy the example which the Pædobaptists set before them, and support by pre-eminent talents.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 173.) *They do nothing more than their opponents.* What then ? *We* hold no principle inconsistent with our practice ; *we* have not confined the profession of Christianity to ourselves ; much less are we accustomed to make a practical distinction betwixt the participation of the Eucharist, and other duties and privileges, after stating in so many words, that the Scripture authorizes no such distinction. The plea derived from the disposition of Pædobaptists to cultivate a religious intercourse, we leave to be answered by himself, who has told us that “we meet on unequal terms.” “The latter (Pædobaptists) surrender no principle, they do not unite with those whom they deem unbaptized.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 64.)

Their other pretence is, that “prayer and praise are not *exclusive* ordinances of the church ; that they were in being before it was formed, and have been parts of true religion under every dispensation.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 175.) But is it not the peculiar prerogative of the faithful to offer *acceptable* devotion ? Is not *prayer in the name of Jesus* a peculiarity of the new dispensation, and is not the requesting a Pædobaptist to present it on our behalf, as clear an acknowledgement of his Christianity, as admitting him to communion ; and consequently as incompatible with his own maxim, that the “church of Christ acting upon the rule he has laid down, cannot recognize *any* person as his disciple, who is not baptized in his name ?”

Mr. Kinghorn is bound by his own declaration in his treatment of other denominations, to abstain from every action which will imply an explicit acknowledgement of their being Christians ; so that as far as he is concerned, it is of no consequence whatever, whether prayer or praise belong to natural, or revealed religion, or whether they are, or are not, exclusive ordinances of the church ; the only question is, whether the reciprocation of such services with other denominations, be not a recognition of their Christianity. If it be, he is by his acknowledgement as much obliged to abandon it, as the practice of open communion, and exactly for the same reason ; since he informs us that his objections to that practice are not founded on any *peculiar* connexion betwixt communion and baptism, but on the common relation which the latter bears to “all the duties of Christianity.”

The preceding remarks are more than sufficient to evince his inconsistency with himself ; which however glaring, is not more so than his deviation from ancient precedent. That the first

Christians did not interchange religious services, with those, with whom they refused to *communicate*; that they did not countenance in the exercise of their ministry, men whom they refused to acknowledge as members of the church, it would be ridiculous to attempt to prove; the fact will be instantly admitted. Let it be also remembered, that this deviation is of far greater magnitude, than that with which we are accused. Who that remembers that the Kingdom of God is not meats or drinks, that its nature is spiritual, not ritual, can doubt that the moral duties of religion, the love of the brethren, with its diversified fruits and effects, taken in their whole extent, form a more important object than the single observation of the Eucharist.

Mr. Kinghorn himself deprecates the very suspicion of placing even baptism, in point of importance, on a level with the least of the moral precepts of Christ. But with respect to the whole of these, they allow themselves to depart as far from scriptural precedent, in its literal interpretation, as ourselves. In the affair of communion, they boast of adhering to "that plain rule of conduct (to adopt my opponent's words) *so did the Apostles, and therefore so do we.*" (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 98.) But here their conformity stops; in every other branch of social religion, in whatever respects the interior of the kingdom, they claim the liberty of treating the unbaptized in precisely the same manner with members of their own denomination; wherein they pronounce their own condemnation; for what should prevent us from retorting, "*so did not the Apostles, but so do ye?*"

The distress and embarrassment which the consciousness of this glaring inconsistency occasioned the venerable Booth, are sufficiently depicted in his Apology. The sturdy saint perfectly reels and staggers under its insupportable weight; which, to use the language of Archbishop Tillotson, is a millstone round the neck of strict communion, which will inevitably sink it into perdition; an incongruity which the most obtuse understanding perceives, and no degree of acumen can defend; and which so totally annuls the plea of original precedent, which is their sheet anchor, as to leave it doubtful whether its advocates are most at variance with the Apostles, or with themselves. The venerable apologist has recourse to the same distinctions with the present writer; but with so little success, and apparently with so little satisfaction to himself, that if the spirit of controversy did not blunt our sensibility, we should sincerely sympathize with his distress. It is humiliating to see the manly and majestic mind of a Booth stooping to such miserable logomachies.

The advocates of the restrictive system must change their ground; they *must* either go forwards, or backwards. They have

already conceded so much to the members of other denominations, that if they would preserve the least show of consistency, they must either concede more, or withdraw what they have granted. They have most unreasonably and capriciously stopped, and fixed their encampment where no mortal before ever thought of staying for a moment. They have already made such near approaches to the great body of those whom we deem unbaptized, as places them at an unmeasurable distance from the *letter* of the apostolic precedent, though in perfect harmony with its spirit; while they preposterously cling to that letter, as the reason for refusing to go an inch farther. They remain immovable (to change the figure) not because they rest on any solid basis, but because they are suspended betwixt the love of the brethren, and the remains of intolerance; just as Mahomet's tomb is said to hang betwixt two magnets of equal powers, placed in opposite directions.

The Scottish Baptists (as I have been informed) act consistently. Conceiving with Mr. Kinghorn that immersion on a profession of faith, is a necessary introduction to the Christian profession, they uniformly abstain from a participation in sacred offices with the members of other societies, and without pretending to judge of their final state, treat them on every occasion as men, whose religious pretensions are doubtful. Whoever considers the import of the following passage, will be surprised Mr. Kinghorn should feel any hesitation in adopting the same system. "It is granted," says our author, "that baptism is not expressly inculcated as a preparative to the Lord's supper; neither is it inculcated as a preparative to any thing else. But the *first* act of Christian obedience, is of course succeeded by the rest; and the required acknowledgement of our faith in Christ, in the nature of things, ought to *precede* the enjoyment of the privileges which arise from faith." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 30.)

By the *first* act of Christian obedience, he unquestionably intends the reception of baptism; and the meaning of the sentence turns entirely on the word *first*. He designs to assert, that such is the prescribed order of religious actions, that unless that ordinance is *first* attended to, every other performance is invalid; that whatever it may be in itself, not occupying its proper place, it cannot lay claim to the character of a duty. We should be extremely concerned at imposing a false construction on his words; but if this is not his meaning, we despair of discovering it. But if our interpretation is just, unless we can conceive of a religion availing for eternal life, in the total absence of duties, it is equivalent to asserting, that none besides our denomination possess true religion. He expressly tells us every other duty must *succeed*,

that is, must come *after* baptism, which with respect to Pædobaptists, is impossible on our principles ; whence it necessarily follows, that while they retain their sentiments, they are disqualified for the performance of duty. The only conceivable method of evading this conclusion, is to make a distinction, and to affirm that though baptism ought, agreeably to the institution of Christ, to *precede* the other branches of religion, yet that when it is omitted from a misconception or mistake, the omission is not of such magnitude as to prevent their being accepted. But should our author explain himself in this manner, he will not only coincide with us, but his argument for strict communion is relinquished. Having acknowledged that “the connexion between baptism and the Lord’s supper is *not more distinctly* marked in Scripture, than between that ordinance and any other duty,” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 30.) were he now to make a distinction in favor of the sacrament, and confine their disqualification to that particular, he would be guilty of an express contradiction. Nor are his words susceptible of such an interpretation. The assertion he makes is in the form of a general proposition ; which is that *all* the duties of Christianity must succeed baptism, in contradiction to going before it ; and the disqualification for the Lord’s supper, which he represents the Pædobaptists as lying under, is inferred solely from the consideration of its constituting a part of those duties.

Thus much for the *duties* ; let us next hear what he says of the *privileges* of Christianity. Baptism, which he styles “the required acknowledgement of our faith in Christ,” he tells us, “ought to *precede* the enjoyment of the privileges which arise from faith.” They *ought* to precede, but *do* they in fact ? Is it *his* opinion that all other sects, as a punishment for their disobedience in one particular, are left destitute of the spiritual immunities which flow from faith ? If it is not, it behoves him to reflect on the presumption of such a mode of speaking, which is little less than arraigning the wisdom of the great Head of the Church, who dispenses his favors in a manner so different from that which he ventures to prescribe. Should he reply, that Jesus Christ, as a Sovereign, is at liberty to act as he pleases, but that we are under an obligation of adhering to the settled order of his house ; it is easy to perceive that this evasion is neither consistent with truth, nor sufficient to establish his consistency with himself. Are not his partizans in the daily habit of exhibiting towards the members of other societies, tokens of their fraternal regard, of inviting them to every branch of Christian fellowship, short of admission to the sacrament ? Will they deny that the communion of saints, even in the absence of that institution, is an important privilege ?

In the next place, to represent the bestowment of spiritual blessings on the great body of the faithful, through the lapse of fifteen centuries, whose salvability, it is confessed, is capable of demonstration from Scripture ; to speak of this, as an extraordinary and extra-judicial procedure, is to confound the most obvious distinctions.

The terms of salvation, which are radically faith and repentance, are clearly propounded in the word of God ; and surely it will not be doubted that multitudes out of the pale of our sect, have exhibited such proofs of their possessing these qualifications, that their enjoyment of the divine favor is not to be ascribed to a secret economy, similar to what had been conjectured by some to extend to virtuous Pagans. Where Revelation is silent, it becomes us to copy its reserve ; but in the present instance, so far is this from being the case, that few propositions are more susceptible of proof from that quarter, than that an error with respect to a positive rite is not fatal ; whence the necessary inference is, that the bestowment of His favors on such as labor under that imperfection, is a known part of His conduct ; that it is not only His intention so to act, but that he has taken effectual care to inform us of it ; not, we presume, for the purpose of enabling us to contradict it, but as a pattern for our humble imitation.

When the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles assembled in the house of Cornelius, though Peter had a short time before doubted the lawfulness even of eating with them, he considered it as such a seal of the divine approbation, that he felt no hesitation in immediately admitting them to all the privileges of the church. He did not presume (with reverence be it spoken) to be stricter or more orderly than God. "Forasmuch," said he, "as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed, who was I that I should withstand God?" a question which we presume to recommend to the serious consideration of Mr. Kinghorn and his associates. The principle on which he justified his conduct is plainly this, that when it is once ascertained that an individual is the object of divine acceptance, it would be impious to withhold from him any religious privilege. Until it be shewn that it was not the principle on which he rested his defence, or that the practice of strict communion is consistent with it, we shall feel ourselves compelled to discard with just detestation, a system of action which St. Peter contemplated with horror, as *withstanding God* ; and when I consider it in this just and awful light, I feel no hesitation in avowing my conviction that it is replete with worse consequences, and is far more offensive to God, than that corruption of a Christian ordinance, to which it is opposed. The latter affects the exterior only of our holy religion, the former its vitals ;

where it inflicts a wound on the very heart of charity, and puts the prospect of union among Christians to an interminable distance.

This new doctrine, that the tenure by which religious privileges are held, is appropriated to the members of one inconsiderable sect, must strike the serious reader with astonishment. Are we in reality the only persons who possess an interest in the common salvation? If we are not, by what title do others possess it? Certainly not in consequence of their faith, for we are expressly taught by this writer, that baptism must *precede* the enjoyment of the privileges which arise from faith; in which however he expressly contradicts himself, for he assures us that none are fit subjects of baptism, who are not previously believers in Christ, and *justified in the sight of God by their faith*. He must either say then, that they lose their justification, unless they comply with that ordinance; or present us with the portentous doctrine of a justification which stands alone, a widowed and barren justification, productive of no advantage to its possessor.

Let it also be seriously considered, whether the positions we have been examining, do not coincide with the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, the opprobrium of the Romish church. But as some of my readers may not be acquainted with the meaning of these terms, it is proper to remark, that the church of Rome attributes the highest spiritual benefits to certain corporeal actions, or ceremonies, independent of the character and disposition of the performer. For example, she believes that the ceremony of baptism secures to the unconscious infant by its intrinsic efficacy the infusion of regenerating grace, without regard to the intention, or disposition of the parties concerned; and that the element of bread in the sacrament, operates in the same manner in procuring the pardon, and augmenting the grace of the communicant. Hence the members of that church lay little stress on the exercise of faith, and the cultivation of holy dispositions, compared to the dependence they place on "bodily exercise," on masses, penances, auricular confessions, and a multitude of external observances, which form the substance of their religion. Consistent Protestants on the contrary, while they conscientiously attend to every positive institute, according to the measure of their light, look upon the few and simple ceremonies of the gospel, as incapable of affording the smallest benefit, apart from the dispositions and intentions with which they are performed; agreeably to the doctrine of our Saviour, who tells us, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." To expatiate on the incalculable mischiefs which have arisen from this doctrine, is foreign to our purpose; suffice it to remark, that it is held in just detestation by all enlightened Christians.

Our business is to show the coincidence of Mr. Kinghorn's principles, with that most dangerous and exploded tenet. He contends that the mere absence of a ceremony, or if you please, an incorrect manner of performing it, is of *itself* sufficient, exclusive of every other consideration, to incur the forfeiture of Christian privileges; of the *privileges in general* which arise from faith. It is not, according to him, merely the forfeiture of a title to the Eucharist which it involves; *that* he informs us is not more affected by it than *any other privilege*: it is the universal privation of Christian immunities which is the immediate consequence of that omission; and as he acknowledges that many to whom it attaches are regenerated, they must consequently be endowed with right dispositions. For what is that renovation of mind which can exist without them? But if such as are possessed of these in the most eminent degree, which he acknowledges is the case with some Pædobaptists, are yet debarred from spiritual privileges, wherein does this differ from ascribing that efficacy to an external rite, which is supposed in the doctrine of the *opus operatum*; and if those who have faith are not entitled to the benefits which result from it, because a certain ceremony is wanting, how is it possible to ascribe more to that ceremony?

Whatever degree of prejudice or inattention we may be disposed to impute to some of the advocates of infant baptism, it would be the highest injustice to comprehend them all, under the same censure. There are those no doubt, who, without adopting our views, have exercised as much thought, and exerted as much impartiality on the subject, as our observation authorizes us to expect from the brightest specimens of human nature; nay, this author admits that "it is possible they may be some of the most exalted characters in point of piety." But it surely cannot be doubted that they who merit this encomium, are as *conscientious* in their performance of infant, as we in the administration of adult baptism; and as they are, by the very supposition, actuated by dispositions exactly the same, the pure intention of pleasing and glorifying God; if we still conceive them deprived of the privileges which we possess, the difference must be ascribed merely to a ceremony, and the *opus operatum* returns in its full force. This however is too faint a statement. It returns in a form more aggravated; for the Papist only contends for a mysterious union betwixt the outward rite and the inward grace, to which the regenerating influence is immediately ascribed, and from which it is considered as inseparable; whereas on the present hypothesis, regeneration and faith are supposed to exist in the absence of the ceremony, but to be deprived of their prerogatives. The system of the Papist exalts the ritual part of religion to an unwarrantable height, without

depreciating the spiritual and internal; the system of my opponent does both.

Thus I have endeavored to examine with the utmost care and impartiality, whatever our author has advanced, in order to prove the *necessary connexion* betwixt the two positive ordinances under consideration. My apology for extending the discussion to a length tedious, it is feared, to the reader, is that this is the point on which the whole controversy hinges. As far as its real merits are concerned, I might therefore be excused from pursuing the subject farther. If the arguments of Mr. Kinghorn, on this head, are satisfactorily refuted, and the contradictions and absurdities into which he has fallen, laid open to the reader, he is already sufficiently answered. That he has taken different ground from his venerable predecessor, will not be disputed. He has argued from premises, and adopted principles, to which that excellent person made no approach. Mr. Booth, whatever was his success, remained on *terra firma*; our author has attempted a flight beyond "the diurnal orb," but approaching too near the sun, his pinions are melted; and his fall will be conspicuous, in exact proportion to the elevation to which he has aspired. He was determined to give the controversy a new and imposing aspect; and conscious that the practice which he undertook to defend, had been hitherto rested on no very distinct basis, he determined to dig deep for a foundation, and in so doing, has disturbed the most received opinions, and endangered the most momentous truths. Were I permitted to prognosticate his fate, I should say that his paradoxical mode of defence, whatever applause it may meet with at present, will, in the end, be of infinite injury to the cause; and his treatise, like the little book in the Apocalypse, be "sweet in the mouth, and bitter in the belly."

But though what has already been advanced, may be considered as comprehending all that is essential in the controversy; as he has thought fit to introduce other topics, the reader is requested to exercise his patience, while we reply to his most important observations, on each of these; after which we shall endeavor to show the futility of the answer he has attempted, to the principal arguments adduced in favor of our practice.

PART II.

THE COLLATERAL TOPICS INTRODUCED BY MR. KINGHORN; CONSIDERED.

CHAPTER IV.

The charge of dispensing with a Christian ordinance, considered.

AMONG the various objections to the system we wish to see universally adopted in our churches, there is none more frequently insisted upon, than that of its implying a right to *dispense* with a command of Christ.* Though the treatise on terms of communion, contains a clear answer to this accusation, yet as it is again brought forward by our author, with unabated confidence, a fuller reply may be deemed requisite.

This writer supposes that the expression “dispensing power” so often used in this controversy, was first suggested by the conduct of Charles the Second, in granting indulgence to the dissenters beyond the allowance of law, a measure which was afterwards adopted for similar purposes, by James his successor. It is surprising a person of Mr. Kinghorn’s acknowledged learning, should fall into such an error ; that he should not know that the doctrine of dispensation, was familiar to preceding ages, and was the subject of much subtle disquisition, and of many refined distinctions among legal writers. It is impossible but that he must have read in ecclesiastical history, of the power of dispensation assumed by the Pope, which formed a principle branch of the papal revenue, and the exertion of which, was regulated by the dictates of the most artful policy. He cannot surely have forgotten, that the refusal to

* Here the following question deserves our serious regard, first, ‘Have we any right to dispense with a clear command of Christ?’—*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 90.

exercise this prerogative, when it was demanded in order to gratify the capricious passions of Henry the Eighth, was the immediate occasion of the reformation in England.

The power of dispensation, is the power of setting aside the law in a particular instance. It may be exerted by the legislature, or by the executive branch of government, under certain regulations, and to a certain extent, previously settled, and provided for, by the original constitution of the state. As the operation of law is general, and the actions to which it applies are susceptible of endless modifications and varieties, some such power may be occasionally requisite to adapt it more perfectly to unexpected emergencies, and by a deviation from the letter, to secure its spirit and design. There is one circumstance, however, which is invariably attached to the exercise of this prerogative, which shows the impropriety of making it the ground of accusation, in the present controversy. It always implies a *known*, and *conscious* departure from the law. He who claims a dispensing power, asserts his right to deviate from the letter of legal enactments; but whoever merely misinterprets their meaning, and on that account applies them to a case which they were not designed to comprehend, or neglects to carry them into execution within their proper sphere; (as his conduct is consistent with the utmost reverence for the law,) is at a great remove from exerting a dispensing power. He betrays his ignorance, but usurps nothing.

When the Pope granted a dispensation, enabling certain persons to marry, within the prohibited degrees, he sanctioned an acknowledged violation of the ecclesiastical canons; just as Charles the First, and James the Second, in their respective proclamations of indulgence to tender consciences, proceeded in direct opposition to existing statutes. But we are conscious of no such procedure; if we err, we err from ignorance. We contend that the law is in our favor; and challenge our opponents to prove the contrary; we ask what prohibition we violate by the practice of admitting good men to communion, though they are not supposed to be baptized? This writer acknowledges there is none, but attempts to supply the defect by general reasoning, which appears to us inconclusive. Such is precisely the state of the dispute; not whether we have a right to depart from the law, but whether there be any law, to which our practice is opposed. We acknowledge the immersion of believers in the name of Christ, is a duty of perpetual obligation; we are convinced of the same respecting the commemoration of our Saviour's passion. Both these duties we accordingly urge on the followers of Christ, by such arguments as the Scriptures supply; but when we are not so happy as to produce conviction, we admit them without scruple to the fellowship

of the church, not because we conceive ourselves to possess a dispensing power, a pretension most foreign from our thoughts, but because we sincerely believe them entitled to it, by the tenor of the Christian covenant, and that we should be guilty of highly offending Christ by their refusal. The law which we are supposed to violate in this instance, we affirm is a mere human invention, a mere fiction of the brain, entirely unsupported by the word of God, which distinctly lays down two positive institutes, baptism and the Lord's supper, but suggests nothing from which we can conclude that they rest upon each other, rather than that the obligation of both, is founded on the express injunction of the legislator. It is our opponents, we assert, who in the total silence of Scripture have presumed to promulgate a law, to which they claim the submission, due only to the voice of God. Hence the charge of usurping a dispensing power is most preposterous, since it is incapable of being sustained for a moment, until it is demonstrated that the law is in their favor; and when this is accomplished, we pledge ourselves to relinquish our practice immediately; but till it is, to assume it as a medium of proof, is a palpable *petitio principii*, it is begging the question in debate.

We repeat again, what was observed in the former treatise, that this charge owes its plausibility entirely to the equivocal use of terms. As we do not insist upon baptism as a term of communion, we may be said *quoad hoc*, or so far, to dispense with it; just as our opponents may be said to dispense with that particular opinion, the doctrine of election for example, which, while they firmly adhere to it themselves, they refrain from attempting to force on the consciences of others; on which occasion a rigid Calvinist might with the same propriety exclaim that they are guilty of dispensing with the truth of God.

So remote is our practice from implying the claim of superiority to law, that it is in our view the necessary result of obedience to that comprehensive precept—"Receive ye one another, even as Christ has received you to the glory of the Father." If the practice of toleration is admitted at all, it must have for its object some supposed deviation from truth, or failure of duty; and as there is no transgression where there is no law, and every such deviation must be opposed to a rule of action, if the forbearance exercised towards it, is assuming a dispensing power, the accusation equally lies against all parties, except such as insist upon an absolute uniformity. In every instance, he who declines insisting on an absolute rectitude of opinion or practice, as the term of union, is liable to the same charge as is adduced against the indulgence for which we are pleading. If the precise view which each individual entertains of the rule of faith and practice, is to be en-

forced on every member as the condition of fellowship, the duty of "forbearing with each other" is annihilated; but if something short of this is insisted on, what is wanting to come up to the perfection of the rule, is in the sense of our opponents, dispensed with. Behold then the *dispensing power* rises in all its terrors; nor will it be possible to form a conception of an act of toleration where it is not included. Such is the inevitable consequence, if the charge is attached simply to our not insisting upon what we esteem a revealed duty; but if it is sustained on the ground of the necessary dependance of one Christian rite upon another, it is plainly preposterous, since this is the very position we deny; it forms the very gist of the dispute; the proof which will at once consign it to oblivion. The objection, in this form, is nothing more than an enunciation, in other terms, of our actual practice.

In every controversy, the medium by which a disputed point is attempted to be disproved, should contain something distinct from the position itself, or no progress is made. There may be a shew of reasoning, but nothing more. It is also necessary, that the medium of proof, or confutation, should contain some proposition, about which both parties are agreed. But what is the case here? Our opponents object that we exercise a dispensing power. How does this appear? Because while we acknowledge baptism to be a duty, we do not invariably demand it as a preliminary to church fellowship. Now let me ask, is this statement any thing more than a mere definition, or description of the practice, which is the subject of debate; so that if an inquiry were made, what we mean by open communion, in what other terms, could the answer be couched? The intelligent reader will instantly perceive, that the medium of proof involves, neither more or less, than the proposition to be refuted. Perhaps they will reply, no; you are guilty of dispensing with the law, not merely because baptism is a duty, but because the Head of the Church has made it an indispensable prerequisite to Christian fellowship. Here the medium is indeed sufficiently distinct from the proposition which it is intended to confute, but it is so far from being agreed upon between the parties, that it forms the very subject of debate. In other words, they take for granted the very position on which the controversy turns, and then convert their arbitrary assumption, into an argument. Thus in whatever light it is viewed, the odious imputation with which they attempt to load us, falls to the ground; and merely shews with what facility they can *dispense* with the rules of logic.

Near akin to this, is the charge of "sanctioning" a corruption of a Christian ordinance. But how the mere act of communion with a Christian brother, whose practice we judge to be erroneous

in a certain particular, can be justly considered as conferring a sanction on his error, is not a little mysterious. If this is a fair construction, it must proceed upon the general principle, that communion sanctions all the imperfections, speculative and practical, of the members whom it includes ; and thus our opponents must be understood to approve all the perverse tempers, and erroneous views, of the individuals whom they receive into fellowship. Will they abide by this consequence ? But how is it possible to escape it, if to tolerate and to sanction, to forbear and to approve, are the same thing ? Will they assert that St. Paul was prepared to exclude the members of the church at Corinth, against whose irregularities he so warmly protested ; or affirm that by declining such a step, he sanctioned the schisms and tumults, the backbitings, whisperings, and swellings, which he reprovèd with so much severity ? The idea is too ridiculous to be entertained for a moment, but not more than the present allegation.

Were an impartial spectator to witness the celebration of the sacrament by persons of different denominations, what would he infer ? That they considered each other as beings "without fault before God," with nothing in their sentiments liable to correction, or in their characters susceptible of improvement ? No ; The only conclusion which he could consistently draw would be, that they looked upon each other as pardoned sinners, washed in the same fountain, sanctified, though imperfectly, by the same Spirit, and fellow-travellers to the same celestial city.

We must either seek a church such as is not to be found upon earth, or be content to associate with men compassed with infirmities ; prepared to exercise towards others the forbearance and indulgence which we need, and to exhibit on every occasion the humility becoming those who are conscious that in "many things we all offend."

Besides, as our author acknowledges that baptism is not to be "compared in importance with the least of Christ's moral precepts," against which men of unquestionable piety are perpetually offending, to a greater or less extent ; where is the consistency of being more solicitous to avoid the appearance of sanctioning ceremonial, than moral disobedience ?

The following sentiment, marked in italics, and delivered with the solemnity of an oracle, is characterized by the same spirit of extravagance. "*The supposition itself,*" our author says, "*that toleration and forbearance will justify us in allowing an omission of any law of Christ in his church, operates as a repeal of that law, and would generally be deemed unreasonable.*" (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 53.) As all duty bears respect to a law, it is impossible to conceive of its omission, without supposing an equal omission of the law.

He illustrates his assertion by referring to the legal qualification, in landed property, required in a candidate for a seat in parliament; where it is evident that to render the cases parallel, it must be assumed, that baptism is by the appointment of the Head of the Church, the necessary qualification for the rights of fellowship, which is the very point in debate; so that we have here another instance of that habit of begging the question, with which he is so familiar. On what occasion has he found us concede what is taken for granted in this illustration; or who would be so absurd, after such a concession, as to pursue the argument any further?

The proposition itself is as untenable, as its illustration is irrelevant. If every rule of action is repealed, the moment its omission, whether partial or total, whether occasional or habitual, whether intentional or unintentional, is the object of forbearance, a repeal is the necessary concomitant of every conceivable instance of toleration. For say, on supposition, the will of Christ were perfectly complied with, in doctrine and in practice, what possible room would there be for mutual forbearance? What, to speak of forbearance, when all is right! Is perfection then the object of toleration? But just in proportion as imperfection exists, some law, some rule of conduct, must be neglected, "for where there is no law, there is no transgression." Will it be affirmed, that when St. Paul censured with so much severity, the swellings, the tumults, the whisperings and the backbitings, which prevailed in the church of Corinth, who were ready to devour each other; when he found it necessary to remind them, that the unjust should not inherit the Kingdom of God, did he after all perceive in them no omission of a law of Christ? This surely none will affirm; and as he still continued to exercise forbearance, without the slightest intimation of an intention to exclude them, he was guilty, on Mr. Kinghorn's principles, of repealing the commands of God. As the evils tolerated were of a moral nature, and he tells us, that he is far from "equalizing baptism with the least of Christ's moral precepts;" in spite of his own concession, he now assigns it a superiority, what is this but a palpable contradiction? But to say that a mistake respecting the nature of a Christian ordinance, is not to be borne with in religious society, while evils of a moral kind are, and must be tolerated, is to mark its pre-eminence, in a manner the most unequivocal.

The mistakes into which he has fallen in this short passage, are so gross and so many, that they deserve a distinct enumeration. First; By affirming that to endure, under any circumstances, the omission of a rule of action, is to repeal it, he has reduced the very conception of toleration to an impossibility. Secondly; As there can be no moral imperfection, but what involves, at least,

an occasional omission of a moral precept, the least of which he affirms, is of greater moment than baptism, he must either contend for the propriety of setting aside forbearance altogether, or must be understood to select for its object the greater, in preference to the least of two evils. Thirdly; In assuming it for granted, that there is a law in existence, which universally prohibits the unbaptized from communion, he assumes the whole question in debate; and if no such rule is admitted, how is it possible we should be guilty of repealing it. Fourthly, In stigmatizing the practice of not invariably insisting on a compliance with primitive baptism, in order to fellowship, as a virtual repeal of the precept which enjoins it, while we inculcate it as a divine command, and testify our disapprobation of its neglect, is a strange abuse of terms, founded on the following principle; that whatever is not absolutely and invariably required as a term of communion, is virtually repealed; whence it necessarily follows, that the whole of that duty in which the church of Corinth was defective, that whole portion of the mind of Christ, which they failed to exemplify, was considered by St. Paul as no longer binding, since however it might excite his concern, and draw forth his rebuke, the *want* of it, it is evident, did not prevent his forbearance. Will he abide by this inference? If he declines it, let him shew, if he is able, why it is less applicable, to the conduct of St. Paul than to ours?

That we do not repeal the ordinance, by which our denomination is distinguished, considered as a *duty*, is a fact, of which we give ocular demonstration, as often as it is celebrated. True, say our opponents, but you repeal it, as a necessary preliminary to the Lord's supper. To which the answer is obvious; first prove that it is so, and then should we continue obstinate, load us as much as you please, with the opprobrium of abrogating a divine command. But cease to run round this miserable circle, of first assuming the existence of a law, confining communion within certain limits, then accusing us of repealing it, and lastly of finding us guilty of transgressing the prescribed bounds, on the ground of that repeal. He who repeals a rule of action, reduces the system of duty to exactly the same state, as though it had never existed. Whenever we are convicted of doing this, whenever we teach the nullity of baptism, or inculcate a habit of indifference, respecting either the mode, or the subject of that ordinance, we will bow to the justice of the charge; but till then, we feel justified in treating it with the neglect due to an attempt to convince without logic, and to criminate without guilt.

The *πρωτον ψευδος*, the radical fallacy of the whole proceeding, consists in confounding an interpretation of the law, however just, with the law itself; in affirming of the first, whatever is true of the

last ; and of subverting, under that pretext, the right of private judgement. The interpretation of a rule is, to him who adopts it, equally binding with the rule itself, because every one must act on his own responsibility ; but he has no authority whatever to bind it on the conscience of his brother, and to treat him who receives it not, as though he were at direct issue with the legislator. It is this presumptuous claim of infallibility, this assumption of the prerogative of Christ, this disposition to identify ourselves with Him, and to place our conclusions on a footing with His mandates, that is the secret spring of all that intolerance which has so long bewitched the world with her sorceries, from the elevation of papal Rome, where she thunders and lightens from the Vatican, down to Baptist societies, where "she whispers feebly from the dust."

This writer has, with the best intentions I doubt not, dragged from its obscurity a principle whose thorough application and developement would doom not our societies alone, but every church in the universe, to a confusion of minds and of tongues, a state of discord and anarchy, the healing of which would soon find him other employ than that of attempting to defend the petty and repulsive peculiarity to which he has devoted his labors.

Before I close this chapter, it is proper to observe, in order to obviate misconception, that nothing is more remote from my intention than to plead for a wilful omission of any part of the will of Christ. His honor, I trust, is as dear, His prerogative as sacred, in the eyes of the advocates of *Christian*, as it is in those of *sectarian* communion. Let each in the regulation of his own conduct, pay the most scrupulous attention to His orders ; and whenever he distinctly perceives that a professor of religion indulges himself in a known and habitual violation of them, let him after seasonable and repeated admonition, "withdraw from the brother that walketh disorderly." But let him not presume to control the sentiments and conduct of others by his standard, and treat as an enemy or an alien, that humble follower of Christ, who is as sincerely devoted to His will as himself ; and who, however he may mistake it in some particulars, would shudder at the thought of setting voluntary bounds to obedience. If to tolerate such, must subject us to the reproach of repealing the law of Christ, let us remember we are not the first who were condemned for undervaluing the ritual part of religion, and for preferring mercy to sacrifice. As we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, we await with much composure and confidence, His decision ; without indulging the smallest apprehension that we shall meet with less compassion for having shewn it ; or that we shall incur His displeasure for refusing to "beat our fellow servants."

CHAPTER V.

An inquiry how far the practice of mixed communion affects the grounds of dissent from the church of England, and from the church of Rome.

MR. Kinghorn expresses his surprise that the champions of the Hierarchy have neglected in their controversy with Dissenters, *to avail themselves of the practice of strict communion*. For my part, I am only surprised at his surprise. For supposing (what is most contrary to fact) that it had furnished them with some advantage against a part of the Baptists, what mighty triumph would it be to have proved, that a branch only of a denomination, by no means considerable in their eyes, had been betrayed into an inconsistency. The abettors of a splendid Hierarchy, were little likely to descend to a petty altercation with the members of one division of dissent, respecting a point which could merely supply an *argumentum ad hominem*, and about which their opponents are far from being agreed.

To us however it is of importance to consider whether the doctrine we have attempted to establish, is justly chargeable with infringing on the legitimate principles of dissent. With this view, we shall briefly examine the substance of our author's arguments on this subject.

We are accused of inconsistency in arraigning the Church of England "for introducing rites and ceremonies which have indeed no scriptural authority, but which are pleaded for, merely as decent and venerable customs; while we ourselves tolerate in the church, the neglect of an institution which we are convinced was universally obeyed in the apostolic times, and which was appointed by the highest authority." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 123.) To this we reply, that the cases are not parallel; that they differ in the most essential particulars.

It is one thing to tolerate, and another to practise. The law of God invariably and absolutely forbids the latter; that is, it uniformly prohibits the performance of a single action which we esteem contrary to his will, but to say it in all cases forbids the former, is, to insist on an absolute agreement respecting every branch of practice. The objection is brought against *us* who neither practise nor sanction infant baptism, that we are chargeable with the same criminality which is supposed to attach to the introducers of human rites and ceremonies in religion, ceremonies which they

unquestionably both practise and approve. The argument of the writer reduced to the form of a syllogism is as follows :

To practise human rites and ceremonies in the worship of God is sinful ;

But the advocates of mixed communion suffer to remain in the church, persons who practise a certain ceremony of human invention ;

Therefore their conduct is sinful.

Who does not perceive that the second proposition, has no necessary connexion with the first, and that the argument is consequently invalid. In order to establish his conclusion, it behoved the author to prove that we practise and approve infant baptism, which he knows to be impossible. If Pædobaptists required our concurrence in what we esteem an erroneous practice, nay if they refused us the liberty of protesting against it, there would be an analogy betwixt the two cases ; as it is, there is none.

We are bound by an express law to tolerate in the church those whom Christ has received ; and he has by the acknowledgement even of our opponents received the Pædobaptists. The first of these positions we feel ourselves justified in affirming till it be disproved ; which this writer is so far from having done, that no attempt, we shall plainly make appear, was ever more unsuccessful. But whether it be true, or not, that we are commanded to act thus, such is our opinion ; and with this persuasion, we are not at liberty to act in a different manner. But will such as prescribe human rites and ceremonies, pretend to act under a similar conviction, a conviction that they are bound by the law of Christ, to use the cross in baptism, to bow to the East, to kneel at the sacrament, and to exact as a term of communion, a compliance with these and other ceremonies, judged by themselves indifferent, and by us sinful. The most zealous champions of the Hierarchy make no such pretensions, and we may therefore very consistently censure them for enforcing under such a penalty, the observation of rites for which no divine precept is urged, while we tolerate Pædobaptists in obedience to a divine injunction ; unless it be the same thing to practise in the worship of God, what it is allowed he has not commanded, and to comply with an express prescription. If the members of the establishment inquire on what ground do you receive a Pædobaptist, we reply, because we are expressly commanded to receive him. But if we inquire in our turn, why do you kneel at the sacrament, and exact that posture of all your communicants, is it affirmed that they will reply in the same manner ? It is not true, then, that mixed communion stands upon the same ground with the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England ; consequently, whatever be its merits or demerits in other

respects, it may be maintained, in consistence with the principle of dissent.

To the objection that it was as much unknown in the apostolic age as the ceremonies in question, we have already replied, that at that period it was impossible there should be any controversy on the subject of baptism, which was so recently instituted and so fully exemplified in the conduct of the Apostles; but that now, when a question has arisen, what is baptism, a new case occurs, in the determination of which we must be guided by the precepts respecting mutual forbearance. To this the author replies in behalf of the Churchman, "very well, and when the Emperors and Kings of former days were converted to the Christian faith, and were desirous of sanctioning the gospel by their character, their property and their influence, another *new case* occurred of which apostolic times knew nothing. When nations became generally Christian, other *new cases* arose out of the new events of the time." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 124.) To this I answer, it is very possible, undoubtedly, for a Churchman to utter the same words, and say a *new case* has arisen; but unless he can say it with the same truth, it will be nothing to the purpose. There is no reason why we should not assert what is true, merely because a false assertion respecting another subject, may be couched in the same terms. Is it true, or is it not, that a refusal to comply with a precept, knowing it to be a command of Christ, is a very different thing from a mere misconception of the nature and import of that command? If it be, will it be asserted that such as had refused to make a profession of his religion, in the way which they were conscious he had appointed, would have been just as excusable as the most candid and impartial of modern Pædobaptists? But unless he will assert this, the author must acknowledge that here is a new case, and that the question how we should treat the wilful contemner of legitimate authority, and the erroneous interpreter of Scripture, involves separate inquiries. From a multitude of passages it is manifest, that he himself forms a very different opinion of the present Pædobaptists, from what he would entertain of such as knowingly and deliberately resisted a positive command. He professes to give them entire credit for their sincerity, and to entertain a firm persuasion of their ready admission into the kingdom of Heaven; which would be absurd on the latter supposition. In maintaining a different conduct towards two descriptions of persons, between which there is acknowledged to be a total diversity of character, we are perfectly consistent; unless it be asserted that judgement ought to have no influence on conduct, nor action be controlled by principle.

Let the impartial reader judge for himself whether it is possible,

by any fair mode of argument, to infer from these premises the lawfulness of making the conversion of Kings to Christianity, a pretext for placing them at the head of the church, or of acknowledging their right to model the worship of God at their pleasure. Yet this is asserted, and these portentous consequences are said necessarily to flow from our principles. It is a matter of some curiosity, what kind of syllogism will fairly connect the two following propositions. It is lawful to admit a pious Pædobaptist to communion, because we are commanded to receive such as Christ has received. Therefore it is lawful to acknowledge a pious Prince as Head of the Church, and to allow him to model its worship as he pleases. We quoted a scriptural precept for the former; will Mr. Kinghorn favor us with something equivalent for the latter; or will he remind us of the passages which assert Christ to be the Head over all things to the church, or those which command us to call no man master upon earth? His reasoning in this, as in the former instance, is clogged with a two-fold absurdity; first, he confounds toleration with concurrence; for they who contend for the right of a King to be Head, I presume *acknowledge* him as such; secondly, because we may innocently do what is commanded, or rather are not permitted to do the contrary, he with great simplicity infers we may lawfully venture on what is *forbidden*.

The same reasoning applies to the introduction of ceremonies, and completely invalidates his conclusion, that because we tolerate infant baptism, which we consider as a human invention, we cannot consistently depart from the Established Church on account of the introduction of rites, which we deem superstitious. He represents a Churchman as addressing us in the following manner. "Is not forbearance to be granted to *us* also in what we deem right and expedient? Suppose that we are weak brethren, as weak as you choose to represent us; why should you not, even in pity to our weakness, tolerate us in adding a few things to the original institutions of the Lord, rather than leave us, and by schism rend the seamless garment of Christ." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 125.) In reply to this let me ask, is the toleration of objectionable ceremonies, sufficient to constitute a Churchman; or are we invited to be mere spectators of these observances, without *joining* in them? But do the Pædobaptists when *they* propose to commune with us, expect us to join with them in their practice of infant baptism? How futile then is it, to conclude, that because we are not to do evil, that good may come, we must on no occasion bear with the imperfections we cannot remedy.

He largely insists on the superiority of his system to ours, on

account of its being at a greater remove from the principles of the Established Church. "The strict Baptist," he observes, "can set the Churchman at defiance, while he tells him respectfully, but plainly, that his church is wrong in its very constitution; that it is formed of materials different from those used by the Saviour, and that these materials are united together in a way totally diverse from that of his institution." (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 127.)

Had he succeeded in shewing that his practice is alone consistent with the principles of dissent, his argument would have been to the purpose. But to found a claim to preference, merely on a wider deviation from the Established Church, is to take for granted, what is palpably false, that the Established Church, like the kingdom of darkness, is a mere mass of corruption and error, from which the farther we recede, we necessarily approach nearer to rectitude. That it comprehends many abuses, we sufficiently attest our conviction by our dissent; but as it contains a mixture of good and evil, if we suffer ourselves to look with a more favorable eye upon a doctrine, merely because its admission will remove us farther from the Establishment, we may fall, ere we are aware, into the gulf of perdition. Upon this principle, we may embrace Socinianism; for Socinians are unquestionably farther removed from the Church, than orthodox Dissenters. We may embrace Popery, since all good Catholics consider the Church of England as being in a damnable state. We always supposed it was the agreement of a doctrine with the Scriptures, not its disagreement with any human system, which forms its true recommendation; and that to consult our antipathies in the choice of a religion, was equally unchristian, and unsafe.

Besides, the objection which he makes to the constitution of the Established Church, is as consistent with our principles, as with his. Where a society embraces a whole nation, and recognizes as her members, all who are born within certain geographical limits, many who are openly wicked must necessarily be included; and the materials of which it is composed, essentially different from those which formed the primitive church, which consisted of such as were "called, and chosen, and faithful." Of such an assemblage, it is not too much to say, in the words of this writer, "that the whole body, taken in the aggregate, are of a *different character* from that which is in the New Testament called a church of Christ;" (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 127.) and as this reason for dissent, deduced from the indiscriminate mixture of good and bad, is not weakened, or impaired, by the practice of open communion, we are as much entitled as he is, to all the advantages it affords.

But when we are accused of using different materials in the erection, from those which were originally admitted into the fabric, because we admit some, who in our judgement are not baptized, we deny the charge, and acknowledge ourselves at a loss to conceive how living stones, built on the only true foundation, can essentially differ from each other, on account of a transient ceremony; unless it is affirmed, that sanctifying grace is a less powerful principle of attraction and assimilation than an external circumstance, and that Simon Magus bore more resemblance to the primitive Christians, than Richard Baxter. We are at an equal loss to discover how a ceremony can impress a character. That immersion leaves no permanent corporeal mark, our senses assure us; is this character then impressed on the understanding, on the heart, or imagination; for the idea of a character which modifies and changes nothing, is as unintelligible to me as the doctrine of transubstantiation.

What the writer means by appropriating to himself and his brethren the exclusive right of setting a Churchman at defiance, is equally mysterious, especially as clogged with this condition, "as long as he can establish his propositions by sufficient proof." A wonderful prerogative indeed! By setting him at defiance, he intends that he is secure of confuting his arguments, which it seems he is able to effect so long as he can establish the opposite propositions, by sufficient proof. What is this more than affirming, that he is certain of being able to prove, what he can prove; and as the Churchman can certainly do the same, they may each enjoy, upon this principle, the pleasure of mutual defiance and mutual triumph.

He either insults the understanding of his readers by the enunciation of a truism, or he means to assert that the practice he has undertaken to defend, is so identified with the principles of dissent, that it is incapable of being maintained without it. The falsehood of this assumption has been sufficiently evinced already; in addition to which, the reader is requested to reflect on the extreme imprudence of attempting to rest a controversy of such magnitude, on so precarious a basis; and to divide and distract a common cause, by encumbering it with the debate on baptism, and the verbal subtleties of strict communion. To such a mode of defence, the Churchman might justly reply—Physician, heal thyself; convince your own denomination of the correctness of your reasoning, before you presume to trouble us with the mysteries of your cabala.

Mr. Kinghorn, in his zeal for baptism, intimates his conviction that the admission of infants to that ordinance, will at once legitimate the constitution of the Established Church, and render a

secession from it indispensable. He quotes with apparent approbation a long passage from Bishop Hall, intended to shew that if the baptism of the church is valid, its constitution must be so also, which he prefaces by applauding that Prelate's discernment, in seeing clearly their intimate connexion. "All your Rabbins," says the Bishop, "cannot answer the charge of your rebaptized brother. If we be a true church you must return; if we be not (as a false church is no church of God,) you must rebaptize; if our baptism be good, then is our constitution good." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 122.) Nothing can be more futile than this mode of arguing, which merely proves that the good Bishop, with all his brilliance of genius, was but an indifferent reasoner. He thought himself justified in dissenting from the church of Rome, notwithstanding her baptism was ever esteemed valid. By the ancient church, through all successive ages from the Council of Nice, the rebaptization even of Heretics was condemned; though Heretics were certainly not esteemed a part of the church. The very society of which the Bishop was a member, has always professed to consider baptism, administered by every class of dissenters, in the name of the Trinity, as valid; so that if the reasoning extolled by Mr. Kinghorn is just, he was guilty of schism, in refusing to unite it at one and the same time with Heretics, Roman Catholics, and Dissenters.

Not satisfied with asserting that our principles militate against the lawfulness of dissent, he maintains that they are inconsistent with Protestantism, and that by necessary consequence they convict Luther and his associates of schism and rebellion. In the treatise on Terms of Communion, it had been urged, that if we believe our Pædobaptist brethren to be in a state of salvation, we must acknowledge them as a part of the true church, and that to refuse them communion, is to create a schism in the body. Applying this reasoning to the case of the Roman Catholics, he attempts to repel it, by remarking that if "we have no right to refuse their communion with us, till they conform to what we are convinced is the will of Christ, we had no right to leave them because they deviated from his will. The ground is in both cases *the same*. Once take away the obligation of conforming to the will of Christ, and the reformation is declared a mischievous insurrection in which all Protestants are involved as aiding and abetting a needless, and schismatical project." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 55.)

To this I reply, that to suppose us to take away the obligation of conforming *in our own persons* to the will of Christ, is to suppose us no longer Christians. For to deny the obligation of obedience, is at once to deny his authority, which is equivalent to a

formal renunciation of Christianity. But if he means that we are obliged to demand in others a perfect compliance with his will, as a term of communion, he takes away the possibility of toleration ; for we can be said to tolerate nothing but what we disapprove, and we can assign no other reason for our disapprobation, besides its apparent repugnance to the mind of Christ. His argument, therefore, is entirely nugatory. It is acknowledged that the lawfulness of admitting a Roman Catholic to *our* communion, supposing him to be a real Christian, is a necessary inference from our principles ; but to conclude from thence that we are obliged to adhere to *his*, is demonstrably false and sophistical ; nor is there the least pretence for asserting that the “ground in both cases is the same.” Of two actions which involve consequences infinitely different, it is impossible the ground should be the same. To receive a pious Roman Catholic to our communion, implies nothing more than an acknowledgement of his being a member of Christ, which is true by the supposition ; to commune with him in the rites peculiar to the Romish Church, is to be guilty of gross idolatry and superstition, which however pardonable it may be in him, whose conscience is uninformed, in me who have no such plea, would be damnable. Luther was necessitated to depart from the external communion of the Church of Rome, if he would not partake in her corruptions, because her communion formed a principal part of those corruptions. Besides, since that church maintains the infallibility of all her decisions, and whoever ventures to promulgate a doubt respecting a tittle of her doctrine, is *ipso facto*, excommunicated till he recants, when the light of truth revealed to Luther her enormities, it was not left to his option to continue in her society, or not, unless he would involve himself in the guilt of most horrid prevarication. He never pretended to depart from the Romish Church absolutely, and in every thing, but in those particulars only, in which she had corrupted the doctrine of the gospel, and adulterated the worship of God ; and however highly he might estimate the advantages of unity, he could not purchase them at the expense of a good conscience, nor dare by assenting to error, or concurring in superstition and idolatry, “to do evil that good might come.” But if a Catholic, of whose piety he entertained no doubt, had offered himself for communion with him, without recanting Popery on the one hand, or proposing to innovate in the worship of God, on the other, on such a supposition, if Luther had refused to receive him, his conduct might have been justly censured. Now, I would put it to the conscience of any impartial person, to determine whether Luther would have had precisely the *same reasons* for declining this act of toleration, as for refusing his approbation of indulgences, or his

adoration of the mass. In exercising the forbearance in question, he would have merely attested the piety of the communicant ; in the other case, he would have directly countenanced and supported what he esteemed impiety and idolatry. With him who is prepared to assert, that each of these methods of proceeding are equally criminal, it is in vain to dispute ; but if they are not, the assertion that the *ground* in both cases is the same, is undeniably false.

Having detected the palpable sophistry, by which my opponent would evince the inconsistency of our principles with the cause of protestantism and of dissent, it remains only for me to remind him of the facility with which the argument may be retorted, and of the striking resemblance between the system of strict communion, and that which is maintained by the Churches of England, and of Rome.

1. The Romish Church, it is well known, pretends to an absolute infallibility ; not, however, in such a sense as implies an authority to introduce new doctrine, but merely in the proposal of apostolic traditions, and in the interpretation of Scripture. While she admits the Scripture to be the original rule of faith, she requires, under pain of excommunication, that the sense she puts on its words, should be received with the same submission with the inspired volume. In what respects, let me ask, is the conduct of the *strict* Baptists different ? A controversy arises on the extent of a positive rite, whether it should be confined to adults, or be communicated to infants. Both parties appeal to the Scripture, which the Baptist interprets (in my humble opinion) correctly, in such a manner as to restrict it to believers ; the Pædobaptist, with equal sincerity, supposes it to include infants. While the former in his own practice confines it to the description of persons to whom he judges it to belong, he acts with unexceptionable propriety ; but when not satisfied with this, he insists upon forcing his interpretation on the conscience of his brother, and treats him precisely in the same manner, as though he avowedly contradicted Christ and his Apostles, what is this but an assumption of infallibility ? All that infallibility which the Church of Rome pretends to, is the right of placing her interpretation of Scripture, on a level with the word of God ; she professes to promulgate no new revelation, but solely to render her sense of it imperative and binding ; and if we presume to treat our fellow Christians, merely because they differ from us in their construction of a positive precept, as unworthy of being *recognized* as Christ's disciples, (the very words of this writer) and disqualified for the communion of saints ; if we allow them "faith," while we deny them "obedience," and affirm them not to "revere Christ's

authority, submit to his ordinances, or obey the laws of his house," we defy all the powers of discrimination to ascertain the difference of the two cases, or to assign a reason why we must ascribe the claim of infallibility to one, and not to the other.

On another occasion Mr. Kinghorn observes, (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 67.) that the strict Baptists shew they understand the distinction between *judging for others*, and acting on their own responsibility. But in imposing their own sense of Scripture on their brethren, and affirming that on account of their differing from them, they do not "revere the authority of Christ," is either *judging for others*, in every possible sense of the words, or the writer has made an impossible supposition. He adds, they allow that the Pædobaptists, *on their own principles*, do right in forming themselves into churches, and in commemorating the death of their Lord. And must they not do equally right, *on their own principles*, in baptizing infants, unless he will assert that the propriety of baptizing infants is not their principle. If judging for others is supposed to involve a claim of infallibility, and on that account, and that alone, to be shunned, to attempt to vindicate the practice of our opponents from that imputation, will baffle the acutest intellect.

2. We have already observed the coincidence of our opponent's system with the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, or the intrinsic and mechanical efficacy of religious rites, independent of the intention and disposition of the worshipper. The Roman Catholic attaches such importance to the rite of baptism, as to believe that when duly administered, it is *necessarily* accompanied with the pardon of sin, and regenerating grace. The strict Baptist maintains that its absence, where all other religious qualifications are possessed in the highest perfection, which human nature admits, deprives the party of "the privileges of faith," (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 30.) and renders him an alien from the Christian church.

3. Both the Church of Rome, and the Church of England, have *devised terms of communion of their own*, and rendered it necessary for the members to comply with innumerable things, besides those which Christ has enjoined as requisite to salvation. The lawfulness and propriety of doing so, is the *palmarium argumentum*, the main pillar and support of strict communion. Let this principle once be abandoned, and the present controversy is at an end, unless our opponents choose to assume new ground, by affirming the necessary connexion between baptism, as they administer it, and the attainment of eternal life; and that they should not perceive the absolute necessity of proceeding so far, in order to be consistent, seems to approach to a judicial infatuation.

4. The adherents of the Papal power claim to themselves the exclusive appellation of the *church*; the arrogance of which pretension, is faithfully copied by the advocates of strict communion. The former however, by confining salvation within her own pale, avoid the absurdity into which the latter fall, who while they affirm the great body of the faithful are not entitled to that appellation, are obliged to distinguish between the mystical body of Christ and his church, which the Scriptures expressly affirm to be one and the same.

CHAPTER VI.

The propriety of appealing in this controversy to the peculiar principles of the Pædobaptists, briefly examined and discussed.

It is due, in my apprehension, to the majesty of truth, that she should be defended only by truth, and that we should on all occasions abstain from attempting to increase her partisans, by corrupt suffrages. Such are the suffrages she may accidentally gain, by the influence of error. As she scorns to employ the aid of violence, which is foreign to her nature, so much less will she condescend to owe any portion of her ascendancy to falsehood, which it is her eternal prerogative, to confound and to destroy. He who wishes to enlighten the human mind, will disdain to appeal to its prejudices, and will rather hazard the rejection of his opinion, than press them as a necessary corollary from misconceptions and mistakes. If the decision of controverted questions is to be subjected to vote, and a superiority of numbers is to pronounce a verdict, the means by which they are procured is a matter of indifference; he who is most successful in enlisting popular humors and prejudices on his side, will infallibly secure the victory. To all legitimate argument, however, it is essential for the parties concerned to reason on principles admitted by both; to take their stand upon common ground, and to adopt no medium of proof, of the truth of which, he who suggests it is not satisfied.

How far Mr. Kinghorn's management of the controversy corresponds with these just requisitions, the impartial reader will be at no loss to determine. In his zeal to increase the number of his partisans, he makes frequent and urgent appeals to the Pædobaptists, with whom the point at issue can rarely, if ever, become a practical question, and who are therefore little interested in its de-

cision. As they admit, without hesitation, the validity of our baptism, the question whether the right administration of that ordinance be an essential requisite to communion, has no immediate relation to the economy of their churches; it interests them only in the case of those individuals who may be desirous of communing with Baptist societies. As far as it concerns the necessity of that particular rite by which we are characterized, it is a controversy in which we are the only parties; and however much we venerate the judgement of the religious public, we cannot forget that their motives to a rigorous examination of the question, bear no proportion to ours. To them it is a theoretical inquiry, to us a practical one of the most serious moment. If in appealing to them, however, he had constructed his reasoning on principles common to Baptists and Pædobaptists, there had been no room for complaint. But instead of this, he enumerates and marshals with such anxiety, all the appendages of infant baptism, all it assumes, and all it infers, as so many irrefragable arguments for his hypothesis, that were we to judge of his sentiments from these passages alone, we should suppose him as tremblingly alive to the consistency of Pædobaptists, as Eli to the preservation of the ark. He adjures them by every thing which they deem sacred in their system, not to forsake him in the conflict, reminding them that if they do so, they must abandon a multitude of positions, which they have been accustomed to maintain against the Baptists, (that is, against himself,) and be compelled to relinquish the field. He therefore exhorts them to be faithful unto death, in the defence of error, and to take care that no arts, blandishments, or artifices, seduce them to concessions, which would embarrass them in their warfare, and render the cause of infant baptism less tenable. Thus he reminds them, that by admitting the principle for which we contend, they must relinquish their plea for baptizing infants, on the ground of its "giving the seed of believers a partial membership, which is recognized and completed when they profess their faith in maturer years. Thus one leading popular representation of its utility is given up." This infant membership, however, he elsewhere exclaims against, as the very precursor of Antichrist, the inlet to almost every abomination; and this popular representation he considers as a most dangerous fiction. (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 17.) He tells them that were he a Pædobaptist, and disposed to adopt my theory, he should be afraid of being pressed with the question, 'Of what use is infant baptism?' (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 22.) It is unnecessary to remind the reader, that in the opinion of Mr. Kinghorn it is of none whatever, but a most pernicious abuse of a Christian ordinance. But, what is more lamentable still, he warns them

that if "they enter into the spirit of our representation, they will be in danger of neglecting it altogether, and consequently either abandon the whole institution, or be induced by the examination of Scripture to become Baptists;" that they will be "guilty of a complete deviation from the principles of their predecessors; that they must find new arguments for their infant baptism; and that without attempting to divine what they may be, their cause will be materially injured by the acknowledgement of the necessity of adopting new modes of defence." All this appears very strange from the pen of a zealous Baptist, who contemplates every one of the doctrines which he appeals to, with unqualified abhorrence; and who must be aware, that just in proportion to the degree of their repugnance to the practice of mixed communion, is the presumptive evidence in its favor. To attempt the recommendation of his theory, by insisting on the impossibility of reconciling it, with what is in his opinion a system of delusion, indicates something nearly resembling the unrestrained impetuosity of a mind so intent upon the end, as to be indifferent about the means, and savors more of the art and sophistry of a pleader, than of the simplicity which characterizes a sober inquirer after truth. My knowledge of the author forbids the slightest suspicion of any deliberate intention to mislead, but in my humble apprehension he has been betrayed by the warineth of debate, and the intemperate sallies of his zeal, into the use, to adopt the mildest expression, of unhallowed weapons; and by courting an alliance with error, degraded his cause.

It is probable he will attempt to justify his proceeding, by saying he has merely availed himself of an *argumentum ad hominem*. But he has greatly exceeded the limits assigned to that species of argument; which may be very properly employed to repel a particular objection of an opponent, by shewing that it recoils upon himself, but should never be laid at the basis of a process of reasoning, because the utmost it can effect, is to evince the inconsistency of two opinions, without determining which, or whether either of them, is true.

But it is not merely to acknowledged errors that the author appeals, with a view to discourage our Pædobaptist brethren from uniting with us; he also endeavors to rouse into action a feeling, which, whatever name he may think fit to give it, is, in my apprehension, neither more nor less than pride. He remarks, that in joining with us, they must either "consider themselves as unbaptized, or satisfied with their own baptism, whatever we may think of it, or as agreeing with the maxim that baptism in any form is of no consequence to communion." The first of these suppositions, he very properly puts aside as impossible. The second, he

reminds them, is "*degrading*, because they permit themselves to be considered as persons who have not fulfilled the will of the Lord, in the very point in which they believe they have fulfilled it. They consequently unite with us on terms of inferiority, and he who refuses to commune with us, because in so doing he tacitly allows himself to be considered as not so complete a disciple of Jesus as he thinks he is, acts a part which is justifiable and dignified." (Baptism a Term of Communion, pp. 115, 116.) The amount of this reasoning is, that whenever a Christian perceives that his brother entertains a less favorable opinion of his conduct in any particular than he himself does, he is bound to renounce his communion; because in every such instance, he must be considered as not so complete a disciple as *he* thinks he is, and to allow himself to be so considered, is a meanness. And from hence another consequence infallibly results, that no two Christians ought to continue in communion, between whom there subsists the smallest diversity of judgement, respecting any point of practical religion; for since each of them, supposing them sincere, must believe his own practice more agreeable to the will of Christ than his brother's, that brother must be aware that he is considered as not so complete a disciple as he judges himself to be, to which it seems it is degrading to submit. The author may be fairly challenged to produce a single example of a disagreement amongst Christians, to which this reasoning will not apply; and therefore admitting it to be just, he has established a canon which prohibits communion, wherever there is not a perfect unanimity in interpreting the precepts of Christ; which he who reflects on the incurable diversity of human opinions, will acknowledge, is equivalent to rendering communion impossible.

Although the instance under immediate consideration respects a point of practice, the conclusion will hold equally strong, in relation to doctrinal subjects. For not to remind the reader that different opinions on practical points, are in effect different doctrines, and that the whole disagreement with our Pædobaptist brethren originates in these, it is undoubtedly true of points of simple belief, as well as of Christian duties, that whoever adopts a sentiment different from that of his fellow-Christians, must, by the latter, be regarded as in an error; and since Revelation claims faith, as well as obedience, "not so complete a disciple as he thinks he is," to which, if it is degrading for him to submit, his only remedy is to depart, and quit the communion. A fine engine truly, for dissolving every Christian society into atoms, and for rendering the church of Christ the most proud, turbulent, and contentious of all human associations.

If it be alleged that Mr. Kinghorn's reasoning was not designed

to apply to the smaller differences which may arise, but only to grave and weighty matters, such as the nature of a Christian ordinance, the obvious answer is, that it is of no consequence to us, for what it was designed ; but whether it be sound and valid ; in other words, whether it be a sufficient reason for a Pædobaptist's refusing to join with us, that in "so doing he allows himself to be considered as not so complete a disciple as he thinks he is." If it be, the consequences we have deduced, will inevitably follow.

Not satisfied, however, with denouncing the union of Pædobaptists with us as "undignified," and as placing themselves on terms of "inferiority," he begs them to consider whether it is not a "surrender of their principles in a manner altogether inconsistent with their views of the law of Christ." This surrender, he proceeds to inform us, consists in their "agreeing to be considered as unbaptized, which is contrary to the opinion which they entertain of themselves." We certainly make no scruple of informing a Pædobaptist candidate, that we consider him as unbaptized, and disdain all concealment upon the subject ; but how his consent to join us on these terms, involves an unworthy surrender of his principles, is very mysterious. His principle is, that infant baptism is a part of the will of Christ ; which we believe to be a human invention. Now how his allowing *us* to believe this, without breaking with us on that account, amounts to a dereliction of it, is a riddle, which it would require an Œdipus to solve. May he not retain his sentiments, and believe us in an error ; and is not his continuing unbaptized, a demonstrative proof that he does so ? And while this is the case, and he manifests his opinion, both by words and actions, is he still guilty of this fearful surrender ?

Besides, what will it avail him to leave our communion ; since our opinion still pursues him, and though he should retire to the ends of the earth, we shall still continue to think "he has not fulfilled the law of Christ in the very point, in which he believes himself to have fulfilled it." There is no conceivable remedy ; he must digest the affront as he can ; but why he should feel it so insupportable, only in the case of our proposing to "receive" him, is passing strange, except the author supposes him to be of so canine a temper, as to be the most dangerous, when most caressed.

It is amusing to see the happy versatility of the author, and with what dexterity he can adapt his viands to the taste and palate of every guest. When it was his object to load with all possible odium the conduct of the Baptists, in admitting the members of other denominations, he professes to discern an essential disparity betwixt their conduct and ours. We, he tells us, are "more to blame than the Pædobaptists that join with us ; they surrender no principle ; they do not unite with those whom *they* deem un-

baptized.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 68.) He was then all intent on reproaching us; when he has to deal with the Pædobaptists, he feels no scruple in awarding them the same measure. The inquiry, he says, will irresistibly arise, if they really and heartily believe that infant baptism is an institution of Christ, why do they wish to unite with people by whom one of his institutions is in their view so manifestly opposed. How can they, in justice to their families, unite with Baptists? Let them, he says on another occasion, consider whether they act wisely, or *consistently*, if they join with Baptists, who receive them on these grounds. If on their part it is connected with a *sacrifice of principle*, they will confess that it is indefensible. (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 114.) By these grounds, he means, on the supposition that baptism is not an essential prerequisite to communion, which he is aware is the principle on which we rest our vindication, and which is certainly perfectly consistent with their conviction of *our* being baptized; the very circumstance he urged before as a proof that they *sacrificed no principle*.

From the writer who so palpably contradicts himself, it were vain to expect any information on this branch of the subject; since it is impossible to conjecture whether the union of our Pædobaptist brethren does, or does not, involve a surrender of principle, in the judgement of him who affirms both. On impartial inquiry, it will probably be found that though no principle is violated on either side, as much candor is evinced on the part of Pædobaptists, in consenting to a union, as on ours. If we join with those whom we are obliged to consider as unbaptized, they unite with persons who in their judgement repeat an ordinance which ought to be performed but once; nullify a Christian institute, and deprive their children of the benefit of a salutary rite. And since the subjects of baptism are far more numerous on their system than on ours, why should they be less offended at our neglect of these, than we at their extending the ordinance too far? Whoever attaches importance to the covenant into which God is supposed to enter with the seed of believers, must highly disapprove the conduct of the parent who withholds from his offspring its instituted seal; nor is it possible for him to cherish the esteem due to him as a Christian, but by imputing his conduct to involuntary error. The supposed cruelty also of refusing to insert an innocent babe into the Abrahamic stock; the impiety of profaning a Christian sacrament by rebaptizing, might be made the subject of tragic declamation, with as much propriety as *their* want of “reverence to the authority of Christ, and disobedience to the laws of his house.” If we must tolerate none who are guilty of omitting a divine law, (which is the doctrine of Mr. Kinghorn) how is it possible for a

Pædobaptist to bear with us, who live in the perpetual neglect of what his principles compel him to consider in that light.

In the judgement of all other denominations, while we neglect to dedicate our offspring to God in the solemnities of a federal rite, however conscientious we may be, we can but very imperfectly imitate the example of Abraham, of whom the Omniscient testified that he "would command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord;" or that of Zechariah and Elizabeth, "who walked in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless." On a fair comparison, it is difficult to determine which party is most entitled to the praise of candor; where both evince a noble oblivion of minor partialities and attachments, made to yield to the force of Christian charity, and disappear before the grandeur of the common salvation.

PART III.

IN WHICH THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE REPLY MR. KINGHORN
HAS MADE TO THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS URGED FOR MIXED
COMMUNION, IS EXPOSED.

CHAPTER VII.

His reply to the argument deduced from the scriptural injunction of mutual
forbearance and brotherly love, considered.

RELUCTANT as the author is to prolong the present controversy to a tedious length, he can neither do justice to his cause, or to himself, unless he notices the attempt which his opponent has made to enervate the force of his arguments ; and here he will be under the necessity of recurring to the principal topics insisted upon in a former treatise.

That dissensions in the Christian church were not unknown in the earliest period of Christianity, is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, who employed himself much in attempting to compose them ; and the principal method he adopted, was to enjoin mutual forbearance, to inculcate the duty of putting the most favorable construction on each other's sentiments, and not suffer these differences to alienate their affections from each other, "whom Christ had received," who were his accepted servants, and would be permitted to share in his glory. (Romans 14: 1—6.) From these premises we argue thus : Since St. Paul assigned as a reason for the mutual forbearance of Christians, that they were equally accepted of Christ, it was undoubtedly a *sufficient* one, and admitting it to be such, it must extend to all who are in the same predicament, (who are in the same state of acceptance,) and as it is allowed on both sides, that Pædobaptists are in a state of salvation, and consequently accepted of

Christ, the same reason which dictated the measure of toleration at that period, must apply with equal force to the debate which at present subsists, between us and other denominations. In this argument the conclusion seems so nearly identified with the premises, that we might suppose the most artful sophistry would despair of confuting it, and that the only objection it were liable to, would be its attempting to prove, what is self-evident.

Let us now turn to Mr. Kinghorn. It was observed in my former treatise, that the question is not what were the individual errors we are commanded to tolerate, but what is the *ground* on which that measure is enforced, and whether it be sufficiently comprehensive to include the Pædobaptists. After quoting this passage, he subjoins, "*this is the question at issue*, and the decision of this will determine whether the spirit of the precepts of the gospel will sanction us in departing from apostolical precedents, especially when such precedents arose from obedience to a divine command." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 40.) He then proceeds to investigate the precise nature of the dissensions which prevailed in the primitive churches; from whence he infers that the disparity betwixt them, and our controversy with the Pædobaptists is such, that the principle on which the Apostles enforced toleration is not "applicable." The expression he here employs is somewhat equivocal. It may either mean, that the phrase "God hath received him," does not apply to the Pædobaptists, or that supposing it does, it is not sufficient to sustain the inference we deduce, which is their right to fellowship. To interpret his meaning in the latter sense, however, would be to suppose him guilty of impeaching the validity of St. Paul's argument, who rests the obligation of forbearance with the party whose cause he advocates, precisely on that ground. *For* God hath received him. It is also inconsistent with his own statement, as given in the following passage, where he paraphrases the words just quoted in the following manner:—"There is nothing in the gospel, but what the Jews can believe and obey, though they retain their national partialities to the law; and therefore since God does not reject them, but receives them into Christian dispensation, you should receive them also. But then, he adds, he receives them on their *believing and obeying the gospel*; and it is neither stated nor supposed that he receives them, notwithstanding they disobey it. And unless this be proved, the cause of mixed communion is not promoted." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 45.) We have here an explicit avowal, that he considers none besides the Baptists as received of Christ, in the sense the Apostle intends, accompanied with a concession that to prove they were, would furnish an irrefragable argument for our practice.

It was certainly not without reason that he apologized for taking different ground from Mr. Booth; for here he is directly at issue with the venerable apologist. He frankly acknowledges the fact which Mr. Kinghorn challenges us to prove; but attempts to evade the conclusion by remarking, "that it is not every one that is received of Jesus Christ, who is entitled to communion at his table, but such, and such only, as revere his authority," &c. (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 62.) Amidst the contrary statements of such formidable champions, who can only agree in their censures of us, while they are at variance among themselves respecting the most fundamental points; where one tells us we are not to commune with other denominations, though they *are* received by Christ, and the other because they are *not* received, what course must he who looks up with profound veneration to these great authorities, take? Where both propose to conduct him to the same place, but one directs him to the east, the other to the west, my humble advice is, to believe neither, but to exercise that liberty of thinking for himself, to which he is strongly invited by the perplexity and confusion of his guides.

Our present concern, however, is with Mr. Kinghorn, who denies that Pædobaptists are received by Christ, in the sense which St. Paul intended in the passage under consideration; while he agrees with us, that it is upon that principle that primitive toleration rested.

Let it be remembered, that while Mr. Booth interprets the word *received*, as signifying received into the divine favor, Mr. Kinghorn contends for its meaning admitted into the church. But since many things must of necessity precede the act of external communion, and every believer must be supposed, in some important sense, to be previously received of Christ, he qualifies or explains his former language, by adding, "he receives them into the Christian dispensation."*

* For the satisfaction of the reader who may not possess Mr. Kinghorn's book, it may be proper to give the whole passage, to which my reply is directed.

"Besides the expression God hath received him, ver. 8, deserves consideration. It clearly applies, as it is stated by the Apostle, to the reception of the Gentiles; and is an argument with the Jewish Christians, not to reject those brethren who eat all things. And suppose it be granted that the expression applies to both parties, (which appears intended in chap. xv. 7,) the sense then is evidently this, God receives not Gentiles *only*, but *also* Jews into the Christian church, though they are encumbered with their Jewish prejudices. There is nothing in the gospel, but what Jews can believe and obey, though they retain their national partialities to the law; and therefore since God does not reject them, but receives them into the Christian dispensation, you should receive them also. But then he receives them *on their believing and obeying the gospel*, and it is neither stated or supposed that he receives them *notwithstanding they disobey it*. And unless this be proved, the cause of mixed communion is not promoted."—*Baptism a Term of Communion*. p. 45.

Let me crave the indulgence of the reader, while we endeavor to sift this matter to the bottom.

1. Whatever disparity may be contended for between the ancient dissensions, and the modern dispute with the Pædobaptists, it can by no means amount to a proof that the latter are *not* comprehended under the clause in question, (God hath received him.) To reason thus, there were certain errors among the primitive professors, which did not bar their admission into the church, but the error of the Pædobaptist is of a very different kind, and therefore it must have that effect, would be to reason most inconclusively, since all that can be justly inferred is, that it possibly *may* have that effect, though the former had not. The utmost point to which the argument, from the dissimilarity of the two cases, is capable of being carried, is, that the latter may possibly not be comprehended under the same rule ; but whether our author has not disqualified himself from urging it, will be the subject of future inquiry.

2. The medium by which he attempts to establish his conclusion is manifestly untenable, unless he chooses to retract a large portion of his treatise. His argument is this, that God receives "such, and only such, as believe and obey the gospel ;" but *other denominations* disobey it, and are therefore not entitled to that privilege. Here however, he is at issue with a greater than Booth—with the Apostles themselves, one of whom declares that Christ "will appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that *obey not the gospel* ;" and another, classes such as *obey it not*, among the "ungodly and sinners," whom he solemnly warns of their fearful end. Either then, the Apostles were wrong, in denouncing destruction on such as *do not obey* the gospel ; or Mr. Kinghorn in loading the Pædobaptists with that charge, while he expresses a confidence of their salvation. Nor will it avail him in the least, to say they do not obey it perfectly ; for we should feel no hesitation in retorting the charge, and affirming that had he himself done so, he would not have penned this passage.

3. As he must on his system distinguish betwixt being in a state of salvation, and "*being received into the Christian dispensation*," there are a few questions, to which we should be glad to receive an explicit answer. He will acknowledge, we presume, that every believer is first united to Christ, and received by him, before he is entitled to the external communion of his church ; that his right to the latter is founded on the credible evidence he gives of his interest in the first of these privileges. If this be admitted, it must hold equally true respecting the Jewish and Gentile converts, whose mutual toleration is enjoined in the passage under dispute. Now I ask, *according to what dispensation* were these primitive

believers united to Christ, and accepted of him, *previous* to their external communion ; was it according to the Christian dispensation, or some other ? If the reply is, the Christian ; I ask again, are our Pædobaptist brethren in possession of the same privileges, as were enjoyed by the primitive converts, before their external communion with the church ? If they are not, they are not entitled to the appellation of Christians in any sense, and consequently could not be admitted to communion, even though they were baptized. If on the other hand, it is acknowledged that they are possessed of the same privileges, the question returns, *by what dispensation* are they held ? If he denies it to be by the Christian, I ask once more, how he acquired this persuasion of their possessing the privileges in question ? He surely will not pretend to have obtained it in any other way, than by an attentive perusal of the New Testament, by comparing the character of pious Pædobaptists, with that of the primitive Christians, as well as with the marks and criterions, by which it has directed us to judge of a state of salvation ; so that the favorable opinion he professes to entertain, must rest on the evidence, which the principles of the Christian dispensation supply. But to say that the maxims of that dispensation oblige him to believe that a class of persons are interested in its promises, whom that very dispensation does not comprehend, although they live under it, is a contradiction in terms. It is equivalent to asserting, that the gospel economy passes opposite sentences on the same persons, and affords evidence for their seclusion and admission, at one and the same moment. It seems evident to a demonstration then, that agreeable to his own concessions, *other denominations*, as well as our own, are received into the Christian dispensation, that by virtue of its essential principles they are entitled to its immunities and privileges, and have consequently a right to the external communion of saints, on a double account, first, because such communion is one of its distinguishing benefits, and next, because they are included amongst the persons whom the Head of the Church has received, which our author interprets, by being admitted into the Christian dispensation.

For the same reason, all that he has said elsewhere, of our not being authorized by the New Testament to recognize them as the disciples of Christ, necessarily falls to the ground ; for since he can have no pretence for believing them in a state of salvation, except on the information derived from the New Testament, which certainly promises salvation to none but Christ's disciples ; we are not only allowed, but impelled by that highest authority, to recognize them under that character. His attempt to nullify their profession, is also rendered completely abortive ; for not to repeat

what was before urged, since they profess neither more, nor less, than to adhere to the Christian dispensation, it will not be denied, that if they are actually received into it, that profession is valid. Let it be remembered, that in deducing these consequences, we have allowed him to interpret the disputed phrase in his own way, without contending for the sense which is most agreeable to the context, as well as most favorable to our hypothesis; and without attempting to impugn the accuracy of his representation, of the dissensions and disputes, which occasioned the injunction, and gave scope to the exercise of primitive forbearance.

4. Though that inquiry might be well spared, without injury to our argument, yet his account of these ancient controversies is so egregiously partial, so palpably designed to serve an hypothesis, that truth forbids me to suffer it to pass without animadversion. In a long and perplexed dissertation, he endeavors to establish a distinction between indulging a needless scrupulosity in doing what is not commanded, and disobeying an express precept; contending that the errors which St. Paul tolerated were of the former sort, and that as they merely respected certain observances and customs neither forbidden nor enjoined, they were to be considered as *adiaphora*, things indifferent, about which the Christian religion is silent. He compares them to disputes about the planetary system, where it is free for every person to form his own judgement, and either to believe with the vulgar, that the sun literally moves round the earth every four and twenty hours, or the earth round the sun, agreeable to the principles of modern astronomy.*

In order to elucidate the question before us, it will be proper briefly to state the different modes of proceeding adopted by the Jewish converts respecting the Mosaic ceremonies, at the earliest peri-

* "The case is very similar," he says, "to the following. At no great distance of time back, the popular opinion was, that the earth was a fixed body, and that the sun and stars made not an apparent, but an actual revolution round the earth. The contrary appeared so unlikely, so contrary to daily observation, that numbers knew not how to admit it. Some reasoned; others took a shorter way, and laughed at what they thought was absurd; another party appealed to the Bible, as settling the point, by asserting that the sun *did* rise, and *did* set, and one distinguished day was commanded to stand still. Good men were to be found on both sides of the question. Suppose now that some serious characters in a Christian church, tenacious believers that the *earth stood still*, and that it was the *sun that moved*, had occasioned a little unpleasant controversy, with some of their brethren that were better informed; and the latter, provoked at their remarks, were for excommunicating them, for want of sense, if not for want of religion, how fitly would the Apostle's reasoning apply. It might be said exactly on these principles, these good men are not chargeable with breaking *any divine law*; their whole crime is, that they are bad astronomers, and talk nonsense; but 'God hath received them;' do you therefore receive them in the spirit of meekness and love."—*Baptism a Term of Communion*, pp. 49, 50.

od of Christianity. That they were universally practised by believers of Jewish extraction, is manifest from various parts of Scripture; and with respect to the church at Jerusalem, is expressly affirmed by St. James. "Thou seest brother," said he, addressing Paul, "how many thousand Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the law." The Apostle of the Gentiles, with all his zeal in the assertion of their liberties, conformed to them himself; partly from respect to the Jewish people, whom he was most anxious, by every lawful compliance, to conciliate, and partly from a tender consideration of the infirmities of his weaker brethren, not yet sufficiently confirmed in the freedom of the gospel. "To the Jews, he became a Jew, that he might win the Jews." But while he displayed this amiable and condescending spirit, he never disguised his conviction that the obligation attached to the Mosaic rites was dissolved, and that the gospel was alone, a perfect rule of faith and practice.

Thus far an attention to the law was justifiable, and founded on the most enlightened principles. Many however, probably the great majority, proceeded a step further, and observed the legal ceremonies, not as the dictate of prudence, or for the purpose of conciliation, but as matter of conscience, conceiving them to be still in force. These composed that class of believers who are denominated *weak*, whose infirmities the *strong* Christians of a more enlightened order, were commanded to bear with. The error which these persons maintained was of serious magnitude; for in the very face of an inspired Apostle, who affirmed the law of Moses to be abrogated and annulled, by the advent of Christ, they still pertinaciously adhered to it, as a matter of personal and indispensable obligation; but though they attempted to revive and perpetuate an antiquated system, an economy which the gospel had completely superseded, and which went by no circuitous route, to impeach the sufficiency and perfection of the latter; their complete toleration was solemnly and repeatedly enjoined on their more enlightened brethren.

This error is compared by Mr. Kinghorn to an erroneous system of astronomy, and is consequently considered as totally indifferent. But how he could possibly believe this himself, or hope to obtrude it on the credulity of his readers, is astonishing. To attach the sanction of religion to a system which the Supreme Legislator had repealed—to scruple various kinds of meat, at the very moment that St. Paul was testifying the Lord Jesus had shewn him, that nothing was unclean of itself; and after Peter had proclaimed the vision by which he was instructed, that the distinction of clean and unclean, was abolished, betrayed a degree of superstitious weakness and pertinacity, most foreign from a

mistake on a merely scientific subject. Were a converted Jew at present to determine to adhere to the Mosaic ritual, I would ask Mr. Kinghorn whether he would consider his conduct as entitled to the same indulgence, as though he scrupled to adopt the Newtonian system of the universe?

Still he will reply, that his error is of a different kind from that of the Pædobaptist; he is guilty of no omission of a revealed duty; while they set aside a positive institute of Christianity. It is by this distinction, and by this alone, that he attempts to evade the conclusion to which this example conducts us. There is nothing, however, in reason or in Scripture, from which we can infer, that to omit a branch of duty, not understood, is less an object of forbearance, than to maintain the obligation of abrogated rites. Let him assign, if he is able, a single reason why it is less criminal to add to, than to take away from the law of Christ, to revive an obsolete economy, than to mistake the meaning of a New Testament institute. How will he demonstrate will-worship to be less offensive to God, than the involuntary neglect of a revealed precept? It is so much more difficult to prove, than to assert, that we commend his discretion in choosing the easier task.

The above distinction is not only unfounded in the nature of things; it is at direct variance with the reasoning of Paul on the subject. He enjoins the practice of forbearance, on the ground of the *conscientiousness* of the parties concerned, on the assumption not only of their general sincerity, but of their being equally actuated in the very particulars in which they differed, by an unfeigned respect to the authority of Christ; and as he urges the same consideration as the ground on which the toleration of both parties rested, it must have included *something* which was binding on the conscience of each, whatever was his private judgement of the points in debate. The Jew was as much bound to tolerate the Gentile, as the Gentile the Jew. "Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. He that observeth a day, observeth it to the Lord; he that observeth not a day, observeth it not to the Lord. He that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not; he that eateth, eateth to the Lord." Now in the judgement of the Jew, still attached to the Mosaic rites, he who made no distinction of meats, or of days, must have been considered as violating, or neglecting a precept still in force, or the injunction to refrain from judging him, would have been devoid of meaning. He must have consequently been regarded by him, in precisely the same light in which our Pædobaptist brethren are regarded, that is, as

violating, though not intentionally, a positive institute. Still St. Paul absolutely insists on the duty of forbearance; and arguing with him on his own principles, he tells him, he has no authority whatever to "*judge*," or deem him unworthy of his fellowship, since he was accepted of Christ, and acted with perfect good conscience in the particular which gave offence. I will leave the impartial reader to determine whether this is not a fair representation of Paul's reasoning, and whether, admitting this, it does not completely annihilate the distinction Mr. Kinghorn attempts to establish, and decide the present controversy as satisfactorily as if it had been penned for the purpose. It is scarcely possible to suppose he will stoop to avail himself of his only remaining subterfuge, by reminding us that in the instance before us, the ordinance supposed to be violated was not a *Christian* one; since it is obvious, that the commands of God, supposing them still in force, are equally binding, at whatever period they are promulgated, or to whatever economy they belong.

It is not, be it remembered, by a peremptory decision of the controversy, or by assigning the victory to one in preference to the other, that the Apostle attempts to effect a reconciliation. He endeavors to bring it about, while each retains his peculiar sentiments; from which it is manifest that there was nothing in the views of either party, which in his judgement, formed a legitimate barrier to union. The attachment of the Jew to the observation of the legal ceremonies, was not in his opinion a sufficient reason for refusing to unite with him, by whom they were disregarded. But in this case, the forbearance which he enjoins was exercised towards a class of persons exactly in the same situation, as far as its principle is concerned, with the modern Pædobaptists, that is, towards persons who violated a precept which was still supposed to be in force; and this consequence equally results, whatever statement may be made of the precise object of Jewish toleration, whether it involved disputed practices among the Jews themselves or the neglect of the Mosaic ritual by the Gentiles. Hence in whatever possible view the controversy may be considered, the Apostle's treatment of it goes to the complete annihilation of the distinction, betwixt the observation of what *is not*, and the neglect of what *is* commanded; since the *mutual* toleration which was prescribed, embraced both.

There was a third description of Jews who attempted to impose the yoke of ceremonies on Gentiles, "assuring them that unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved." It was this which occasioned the convention of the Apostles and Elders with the Church at Jerusalem, where it was solemnly decided that Gentile converts should enjoy a perfect im-

munity from legal observances. This formal determination, however, was far from putting an end to the controversy; the efforts of Jewish zealots were probably repressed for a time, but they soon recovered their resolution, and artfully propagated these doctrines with great success in various quarters, and especially among the churches planted in Galatia. On this occasion Paul expressed himself with great vehemence, telling the Galatians that he "could wish that those who troubled them were cut off." By inculcating the law as an indispensable prerequisite to salvation, they annulled the grace of God, subverted the truth of the gospel, and impeached the sufficiency and validity of the great propitiation. The attempt to place the rites of an economy, which while it continued was merely the shadow of good things to come, upon a footing with the living, eternal verities of the gospel, was in effect, to obscure its lustre, and debase its character. That no indulgence was shewn towards the inventors and propagators of this pernicious heresy, is admitted; but it is equally evident that he made a wide distinction between the deceivers and the deceived, between the authors, and the victims of delusion. With the last of these, he reasons, he expostulates; he warns them of the tendency of their errors, and expresses his apprehensions lest he had "bestowed upon them labor in vain." He indignantly asks who had bewitched them, that they should not obey the truth; that after beginning in the Spirit, they should end in the flesh; and when they had been replenished with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, "return again to the weak and beggarly elements." But in the midst of these pointed reproofs, as they were not fully aware of the consequences of their defection, as they were not in a confirmed state of heresy, he continued to treat them with the tenderness of a father, without uttering a breath that might seem like a threat of excommunication.

5. We shall not content ourselves with this answer. We accept Mr. Kinghorn's challenge, and engage to produce an instance of men's being tolerated in the primitive church, who neglected an express command of Christ, and that of the highest moment. We must only be allowed to assume it for granted, that the Apostles were entitled by the highest right to be considered as members of the Church which they planted, and of which they are affirmed to be the foundation. These very Apostles, however, continued for a considerable time, to neglect the express command of their Master, relating to a subject of the utmost importance. It will not be denied, that he expressly directed them to go forth immediately after the descent of the Spirit and to preach the gospel to every creature. Did they immediately attempt to execute this commission? From the Acts of the Apostles we

learn that they did not ; that for a considerable period, they made no effort to publish the gospel except to the Jews, and that it required a new revelation to determine Peter to execute this order in its full extent, by opening the door of faith to the Gentiles. But for the vision presented at Joppa, from all that appears, the preaching of the word would have been limited in perpetuity, to one nation ; and when Peter, moved by an immediate voice from Heaven, began to impart it to Cornelius and his family, he was vehemently opposed by the Church at Jerusalem. So far indeed were the primitive Christians from entering into the views of their divine Master, that when a "number of them were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, they went as far as Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the gospel to the Jews only." That highly favored people, elated with the idea of its religious preeminence, looked down with contempt on other nations ; while it appropriated the Kingdom of God to itself, as its exclusive patrimony, without suspecting, for a moment, that it was the design of the Almighty, to admit a different race of men, to an equal participation of the same privileges. Under the influence of these prejudices, the first heralds of the gospel, slowly and reluctantly imbibed its liberal and comprehensive spirit.

Nor is this the only instance in which Mr. Kinghorn himself will be found to approve of the toleration of such as have habitually neglected a positive command. The great majority of our own denomination, influenced principally by the writings of Gill and Brine, admirers of Crisp, held to a very recent period, that it was improper to urge sinners to repentance, or to enjoin upon them the duty of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Their practice, it is needless to add, corresponded with their theory, and they anxiously guarded against the inculcation of any spiritual duties whatever on the unconverted. My respectable opponent is, I am aware, at a great remove from these sentiments ; and that the reason he would assign for rejecting them, is that our Saviour commenced his ministry by calling men to repent, and that "he commanded his Apostles to testify every where repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." But if these be his reasons, he must acknowledge that the eminent persons before mentioned, in declining to perform what our Lord commanded his Apostles, neglected, or broke a divine precept. But is he prepared to affirm that they were not members of the church ? Will this sturdy champion of the strict Baptists be ungracious enough

* It is but justice to the memory of the great and excellent Fuller, to observe, that it is to his writings chiefly our denomination is indebted for its emancipation from these miserable shackles and restraints.

to pass a sentence of excommunication on the great majority of his precursors in this controversy? But unless he is prepared for this, he must acknowledge that the right of toleration extends to such as neglect, or violate a revealed precept. It is unnecessary to remind the reader of the magnitude of the error in question, which would at once have annihilated the apostolic commission, by rendering it impossible to preach the gospel to *any creature*, since there were in the Gentile world none to whom it could, on this principle, be addressed. The whole ceremony of baptism sinks into insignificance in the comparison.

In answer to this challenge we have produced two cases, in which toleration has been extended to such as neglect or violate a divine precept; the first taken from the holy Apostles, the second from our fathers and predecessors in our own denomination.

The reader is requested to advert to the interminable discord and dissension with which this principle is replete. The principle is, that whenever one Christian deems another to live in the neglect and violation of a positive command, however conscientious and sincere, he must renounce the communion of the party which he supposes erroneous. Who does not perceive that the application of such a principle will furnish a pretext for endless dispute and contention; that not only a different interpretation of the law of baptism will be a sufficient occasion of division, but that whoever supposes that any branch of the primitive discipline has fallen into disuse, will feel himself justified, nay compelled, to kindle the torch of discord, and to separate chief friends. If no latitude is to be allowed in interpreting the will of Christ, no indulgence shewn to such of the faithful, who, from a deficiency of light, neglect and overlook some part of his precepts, how is it possible the practice of reciprocal exclusion should stop within the limits which this author has assigned it? Are there two thinking men to be found, who are fully agreed respecting all the minuter details of Christian discipline and worship? Are they fully agreed on the question of what *was* the primitive discipline, much less how far a conformity to it is either proper or practicable? Who that is competent to speak on these subjects, is not aware, that there are no questions involved in greater obscurity than these, none on which the evidence is less satisfactory, and which more elude the researches of the learned, or administer more aliment of dispute to the contentious. One class of Christians believes that a plurality of elders is essential to the organization of a church, because the Scripture always speaks of them in the plural number; and confident that such is the will of Christ, he dares not recognize a church, in which that circumstance is wanting. Another attaches importance to weekly

communion, which he justly contends was the uniform practice of the Apostles, and of the primitive age; a conformity to which, in this particular, is with him an indispensable condition to communion. A third turns his eyes towards lay exhortations, the disuse of which he considers as practically superseding some of the plainest passages of Scripture, quenching the Spirit, and abridging the means of religious improvement; he consequently scruples the communion of those by whom this ordinance is neglected. A fourth, adverts to the solemnity with which our Lord exemplified and enjoined the washing of feet, and the frequency with which the Apostles inculcated the kiss of charity; and having no doubt that these injunctions are of perpetual obligation, feels himself necessitated to withdraw from such as by neglecting them "walk disorderly." A fifth contends for the total independence of churches, conceiving that the cognizance of ecclesiastical causes is by divine right vested in the people, who are to determine every thing by a majority of votes, in opposition to those who contend for a church representative; and believing such an arrangement to be an important branch of the will of Christ, he conscientiously refuses the communion of those societies which decline to adopt it.

These different systems are, no doubt, distinguished by different degrees of approximation to truth; but what is of importance to remark, however they may differ in other respects, they agree in this, that upon the principle we are attempting to expose, they furnish to such as adopt them just as reasonable a pretext for separate communion, as the disagreement respecting baptism; nor is it possible, if that principle be admitted, to reconcile the independent exercise of intellect with Christian unity. The instances already adduced are a mere scantling of the innumerable questions which would give occasion to a diversity of judgement, respecting the mind of Christ, and consequently necessitate the withdrawal of Christians from each other. The few societies who have attempted to carry this theory into practice, have already exhibited such a series of feuds and quarrels, as are amply sufficient to ensure its reprobation; and merely because they have acted more *consistently*, they have acted much worse than the greater part of the churches who practise strict communion. Let this principle be once established, and fairly acted upon, and there is no question but that divisions will succeed to divisions, and separations to separations, until two persons possessed of freedom of thought will scarcely be found capable of walking together in fellowship; and an image of the infinite divisibility of matter will be exhibited, in the breaking down of churches into smaller and smaller portions. An admirable expedient, truly, for keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! That there is no hyperbole in this representa-

tion will be obvious, if we do but consider the difficulty of procuring an entire unanimity in the interpretation of those parts of Scripture, which are supposed to relate to the will of Christ, in the organization and constitution of his church.

6. There is one important consideration to which the reader is requested to attend, before we dismiss this branch of the subject. My opponent affirms, that none besides our own denomination are comprehended within the clause, in which the Apostle affirms the reception of erring Christians. He acknowledges, that if it can be proved that they are included under that description, the precept of toleration extends to their case, and that the only question at issue is, whether they *are* so or not, which he, in opposition to Mr. Booth denies.* The reader is entreated seriously to consider the necessary result of this position, whether it does not amount to a repeal of the Scriptures, considered as the rule of faith and manners. It will not be denied that the promises and precepts of the New Testament are uniformly addressed to the same description of persons, with those particular injunctions under present discussion, and that under the terms *strong* and *weak*, by which are designated the two respective classes, who are commanded mutually to bear with each other. Nor can we hesitate whether the disputed phrase, *God hath received him*, ought to be interpreted in the same extent. As the inscriptions prefixed to the inspired Epistles determine to whom they were addressed, so that which is written to the Romans is inscribed to "all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints;" and not a syllable is found in the precepts respecting mutual forbearance, comprised in the 14th and 15th chapters, which limits them to any particular part of that church, in distinction from the whole. They were intended for the universal regulation of the conduct of the members of that community towards each other.

The Epistles of the rest of the Apostles also, though directed to the inhabitants of different places from that to the Romans, are uniformly ascribed to the same description of persons, as will be manifest on their inspection; or in other words, the supposed genuine followers of Christ in that age, are the persons to whom the epistolary parts of the New Testament are directed; and, consequently, universal precepts enjoined on any one society, must have been considered as equally binding on all the faithful. On any

* The Author of *Terms of Communion* observes, "that the question at issue is not what were the individual errors we are commanded to tolerate, but what is the ground on which that measure is enforced, and whether it be sufficiently comprehensive to include the Pædobaptists." In reply to which, Mr. Kinghorn sets out with remarking: "I admit *that is the question*, and the decision of this question will determine, whether the precepts of the gospel will sanction us in departing from apostolical precedent," &c.

other supposition, instead of the inspired writings at large, being regarded as the universal rule of faith and practice, each church would have possessed a distinct code. Hence it follows that the seven churches of Asia, as well as those who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia, supposing them acquainted with the Epistle to the Romans, would have been under the same obligation of observing its injunctions, with the Christians at Rome. But among the various precepts, intended to regulate the conduct of Christians, comprised in the code of inspiration, such as enjoin mutual forbearance with each other's imperfections and infirmities, hold a conspicuous place, and the rule propounded on that occasion, we perceive to have been universally obligatory on believers of that generation.

When we propose to extend the same method of proceeding to our Pædobaptist brethren, in the present day, we are repelled; and my opponent reminds us that we are not authorized to assign, in the present case, the reason for forbearance which was urged by St. Paul, because *they are not received* in the sense which he intended. The reason itself, he acknowledges, would be a sufficient justification, could the fact on which it proceeds be established; but he denies the fact.

Their error, it is asserted, is of such a nature, that it places them totally out of the question, and whatever is said on the subject of mutual forbearance in the New Testament is, in the present state of things, to be considered as applicable merely to the conduct of Baptists toward each other; from which it necessarily follows, that no part of the precepts or promises of Scripture can be proved to apply to the great body of believers, at present, not even to such as appear preeminent in piety; for all these precepts and promises were originally addressed precisely to the same description of persons, with the injunctions in question; and as it is contended that *these* belong at present only to Baptists, by parity of reason the former must be restricted to the same limits. On this principle, there is not a syllable in the New Testament, from which a Pædobaptist can derive either consolation or direction as a Christian; not a single promise which he can claim, nor a single duty resulting from the Christian calling, with which he is concerned; for the class of persons to whom these were originally addressed, was one and the same with those on whom the duty of mutual forbearance was inculcated.

The inscription of the Epistle to the Romans is of the same extent with the injunctions contained in the 14th and 15th chapters, and no greater; the same description of persons are evidently addressed throughout; it was the *saints*, the *beloved of God*, mentioned in the beginning of the letter, who on account of their com-

mon relation to the Lord, were commanded to bear with each other's infirmities. Now if it be asserted that infant baptism is an error so different from those which were contemplated by the author, in that injunction; that its abettors stand excluded from its benefit, how will it be possible to prove that they are *saints*, that they are *beloved of God*, or that any of the attributes ascribed to Christians in that epistle, belongs to *them*. Mr. Kinghorn may affirm, if he pleases, that the characteristic descriptions are applicable, while the injunctions under discussion are not. He may affirm, but how will he prove it, since both are addressed to the same persons, and the injunction of forbearance enjoined alike on them all.

From a letter, consisting partly of affectionate congratulations, and partly of serious advice, both intended for the comfort and direction of the same persons, to infer that the congratulations apply to Christians of all denominations, and the advice to one only, is capricious and unreasonable. The same conclusion holds good, respecting the whole of the New Testament. Whatever is affirmed in any part of it, respecting the privilege of primitive believers, was asserted primarily of such only as were baptized, because there were no others originally in the church; all the reciprocal duties of Christians were in the first instance enjoined on these; among which we find precepts enforcing without a shadow of limitation the duty of cultivating Christian fellowship. But the last, our opponents contend, are to be restricted to Baptists; whence it necessarily follows, unless we had some independent evidence on the subject, that the former must be restricted in the same manner; and that consequently all other denominations, however excellent in other respects, are left without any scriptural proof of their interest in the divine favor, or any directions for that part of their conduct which concerns their Christian obligations. Were there indeed any other medium of proof, besides the writings of the Apostles, of equal authority, by which it were possible to supply their deficiency, the case would be different; from this independent source, we might possibly learn the fact, that *other denominations* also were included within the promise of eternal life; but while our knowledge on the subject is derived from one book, whose precepts for the regulation of the conduct of believers towards each other universally, are affirmed not to extend to our intercourse with Pædobaptists, it is impossible to establish that conclusion; for to attempt to limit the application of Scripture in one part, and to make it universal in another, where both were originally intended to be taken in the same extent, is plainly unreasonable.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the argument for mixed communion, founded on the Pædobaptists being a part of the true church.

THE author of "Terms of Communion" founded an argument for the admission of sincere Christians of every denomination, to the Lord's table, on their being a part of the true church. He remarked that whenever that term occurs in Scripture, in relation to spiritual matters, it constantly denotes, either members of a particular community, accustomed to meet in one place; or the whole body of real believers, dispersed throughout the world, but considered as united to one head; that this body, is expressly affirmed to be the body of Christ, of which every genuine believer is a member; that we are seriously warned against whatever tends to promote a schism in it; and that these admonitions are directly repugnant to the practice, under any pretext whatever, of repelling a sincere Christian from communion. If we allow the identity of the church of Christ with his body, which St. Paul expressly affirms, and which he assumes as the basis of his whole train of reasoning, the conclusion we have drawn, results from it so immediately, that the attempt to place it in a clearer light, seems a waste of words. If the alienation of affection which prevailed in the church at Corinth, was sufficient to constitute a schism, much more a rupture of communion. But a schism or division in the body, the Apostle deprecates as one of the greatest evils, as tending immediately to its destruction, as well as most repugnant to the scope and genius of Christianity. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1: 12, 13.) "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Here the unity of the church is most clearly affirmed; and whatever tends to divide it, is stigmatized under the notion of an attempt to divide Christ himself.

The reader will probably feel some curiosity to know, how Mr. Kinghorn will reconcile his hypothesis, with these statements; whether he is prepared, in contradiction to the Apostle, to deny the identity of the Church of Christ with his body, or whether acknowledging this, he will yet contend for the necessity of dividing it, in opposition to his solemn injunctions. He will be a little sur-

prised at finding that he makes no reply whatever, that he is speechless, and without attempting to rebut the argument, turns aside to other subjects, on which he contents himself with repeating what he has already asserted, times without number. For what purpose he announced his intention to discuss this topic, it is not easy to conjecture ; unless he flattered himself with the hope of finding some good natured readers, who would give him credit for having done, what he avowed his intention of performing. Be this as it may, not a word escapes him throughout the chapter, from which it is possible to learn, whether he considers Pædobaptists as a part of the church, or not ; the affirmation, or denial of which, is essentially involved in the discussion.

The only answer he attempts to the preceding reasoning is included in an assertion, the fallacy of which, has already been amply exposed. "Once take away the obligation," saith he, "of conforming to the will of Christ, and the Reformation is declared a mischievous insurrection, in which all parties are involved, in aiding and abetting a needless and schismatical project. But if it be right to leave good men, because they have left Jesus Christ, it is right not to admit them till they come to his terms." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 55.) To which it is sufficient to reply, that to leave good men, that is, to refuse to join with them in those particulars, in which we suppose them to have deviated from the will of Christ, is the necessary dictate of allegiance ; but to refuse to walk with them as far as we are agreed, to repel them from our communion, on account of errors and corruptions, in which we are under no necessity of participating, is a very different affair ; it is an assumption of infallibility, and a deliberate invasion of the rights of conscience.

The logical force of Mr. Kinghorn's reasoning, is exactly on a footing with that of the following argument. If it be right to leave my friend when he repairs to the gaming table, it is right not to admit him into my house, till he has relinquished the practice of gaming. If I must not go with him to the theatre, I must renounce all sort of intercourse with him, until he has abandoned theatrical amusements ; a conclusion to which a stern moralist may easily be supposed to arrive, but which no correct reasoner will attempt to deduce from these premises.

That the mystical body of Christ is *one* and *one* only, and that all sincere believers are members of that body, is so clearly and unequivocally asserted in the sacred Scriptures, that it would be trifling with the reader to enter into a formal proof of a proposition, so obvious and so undeniable. The wildest heretical extravagance has never proceeded so far, as to ascribe two or more mystical bodies to the same Head, or to deny that Christ is in that charac-

ter really and virtually united to all the faithful. It is equally certain that the term church, whenever it is applied to denote the whole number of believers diffused over the face of the earth, is identified in Scripture with the body of Christ. The church is in more passages than one affirmed to be his body. "He is the head of the body, the Church." "Who now rejoice," saith St. Paul, "in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, *for his body's sake, which is the church.*" (Colos. 1: 10, 24. Eph. 5: 23, 30, 32. 1 John 3: 19, 20.)

In the language of Scripture, two classes of men only are recognized, believers and unbelievers, the church and the world; nor is it possible to conceive, in consistency with the dictates of inspiration, of a third. All who are in Christ are in a state of salvation; all who belong to the world, in a state of spiritual death and condemnation. "The former are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ; the latter, the *whole world*, lieth in the wicked one." If we allow ourselves to imagine a description of persons, who though truly sanctified in Christ and united to him as their Head, are yet no parts of his church, we adopt a Utopian theory, as unfounded and extravagant as the boldest fictions of romance. It is the church, and that only, if we believe the inspired writers, which "Christ so loved as to give himself for it, that he might sanctify it and cleanse it; it is that alone, which he will present to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle." (Eph. 5: 27.)

It is strange that Mr. Kinghorn should not explicitly inform us, whether Pædobaptists are, or are not, to be considered as a part of this universal Church. This he ought certainly to have done, or have declined entering on a branch of the controversy, which he must be aware, hinges entirely on that point. If they are admitted to be a part of his church, and he still contends for their exclusion, this is formally to plead for a schism in the body; it is to justify the forcible separation of one member from another, and to destroy the very idea of its unity. On this principle, the pathetic exhortations to perfect cooperation, and concord, drawn from the beautiful analogy betwixt the mystical and natural body, insisted upon in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are completely superseded; and one member instead of being prohibited from saying to another, "I have no need of thee," is taught to shrink from its contact, as a contamination. Whenever we are invited to concur in practices, which we esteem erroneous, or corrupt, our refusal to comply is justified by a principle the most obvious, and the most urgent, the previous obligation of obeying God, rather than man; but if we object to a transient act of communion, with a member of the body of Christ, on account of those er-

rors, or corruptions in which we are not called to participate, we are guilty of dividing that body. The reason of my adverting to a *transient* act is, that I am supposing the cause of separation to rest with us, and that a member of a different community proposes merely to unite in an occasional commemoration of the ineffable love of the Redeemer, without either a formal renunciation of the peculiarities of his sect, or an attempt to introduce them. In such circumstances, occasional fellowship is all that can be looked for; the adoption of different modes of worship, a predilection for different rites and ceremonies, will naturally dispose him to prefer a permanent union with professors of his own persuasion. But while in the mutual intercourse of such societies, a disposition to recognize each other as Christians is cultivated, the unity of the body is preserved, notwithstanding their disagreement in particular points of doctrine, or of discipline. Owing to a diversity of judgement, respecting the proper organization of churches, obstacles, at present invincible, may prevent their incorporation; and it is left to the conscience of each individual to determine, to which he will permanently unite himself. An enlightened Christian will not hesitate for a moment, in declining to join with that society, whatever be the piety of its individual members, in which the terms of communion involve his concurrence in religious observances, of whose lawfulness he entertains any doubt. Hence arises, in the present state of religion, an impassable barrier to the perfect intercommunity of Christian societies. But it is not upon *this ground* that my opponent objects to the practice for which we are contending. He rests his refusal to commune with members of other denominations, on the principle of their not being entitled to be *recognized as Christians*. He protests against a union with them, not on account of any erroneous or superstitious observances, with which the act of fellowship is necessarily combined, but considers them as personally disqualified. His hypothesis is indeed so wild and incoherent, that it is difficult to state it with accuracy, or to preserve a steady conception of it in the mind. According to his theory, the Pædobaptists occupy a station the most anomalous and extraordinary, that ever entered the human imagination. Many of them are genuine believers, of whose exalted piety he avows the fullest conviction, yet they are not to be *recognized as Christians*; they are members of the mystical body of Christ, or they could derive from him no saving influence or benefit, yet are excluded from all the advantages resulting from the union and cooperation of the several parts of which it consists; and though as a portion of the mystical body, it is impossible to deny them a place in the *one catholic* or *universal* church, yet it is the duty of every particular church, to dis-

own, and exclude them. In short, the great majority of the sincere followers of the Saviour, whose names are written in the book of life, are totally disqualified for performing the duties, and enjoying the privileges, which distinguish the church from the world; betwixt which they occupy some intermediate place, some *terra incognita*, whose existence it is as difficult to ascertain, as the *limbus patrum*, or a mansion in the moon. In the present state of the Christian church, that extensive portion of the New Testament, which was designed to cement the affections, and to regulate the conduct of the faithful towards each other, is superseded; its precepts are in a state of suspension and abeyance, and in the midst of Egyptian darkness, which envelopes the Christian world, the Baptists alone dwell in the light of another Goshen. However strange these positions may appear, they form but a part of the absurdities which necessarily flow from our author's theory; nor is there any possible way of evading them, but by denying that Pædobaptists belong to the mystical body of Christ, or demonstrating the consistency of their exclusion with the union and co-operation, which St. Paul enjoins; or by asserting the existence of more mystical bodies than one, destined to subsist apart.

CHAPTER IX.

The injustice of the exclusion of other denominations, considered as a punishment.

In the treatise "On Terms of Communion," it was urged, that as exclusion from the communion of the church is the highest ecclesiastical censure, which it is possible to inflict, it can only be justified, on the supposition of a proportional degree of demerit in the objects of it. If the moral turpitude inherent in the practice of infant baptism, is of an order which entitles it to be compared to the habitual indulgence of vice, or the obstinate maintenance of heresy, it is but fit it should be placed on the same level, and subjected to the same treatment; but if the understanding, and the heart equally revolt at such a comparison, that method of proceeding must be allowed to be unjust. To this our author replies, by denying the propriety of applying the term *exclusion* to a bare refusal of admission. "Words," he informs us, "must strangely have altered their meaning, before such an application of the phrase in question can be justified." To be com-

pelled to dispute about the meaning of terms is always humiliating, but that his assertion is unfounded, is sufficiently evident, from the authority of the most eminent critics. Our great Lexicographer, under the word 'exclude,' defines it thus, "to shut out, to hinder from entrance, or admission;" 'exclusion' he defines, "the act of shutting out, or denying admission." Thus much for his accuracy as a grammarian. Let us next examine his reasoning.

He denies that the act of debarring every other denomination from admission is a *punishment*—"it is not considered as such by sensible Pædobaptists." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 60.)

But why is it not? Solely because the Baptist societies are too few and too insignificant to enable them to realize the effects of their system, in its full extent. Their principle involves an absolute interdict of church privileges to the members of every other community; but being an inconsiderable minority, there are not wanting numerous and respectable societies, who stand ready to give a welcome reception to the outcasts, and to succour the exiles. That their rejection is not followed by its natural consequence, a total privation of the communion of saints, is not to be ascribed in the smallest degree to the liberality or forbearance of our opponents, but solely to their imbecility. The celebration of the Eucharist they consider as null and void, when attended to by a Pædobaptist; his approach to the table is absolutely prohibited within the sphere of their jurisdiction; and should their principles ever obtain a general prevalence, the commemoration of the love of a crucified Saviour would become impracticable, except to persons of their own persuasion. Instances have often occurred, where the illiberal practice, against which we are contending, has been felt to be a punishment of no ordinary severity; where eminently holy men have been so situated, that the only opportunity they possessed of celebrating the passion of the Redeemer has been withheld, and they have been compelled, most reluctantly, to forego one of the most exalted privileges of the church; nor has it ever been known, that compassion for the peculiar hardship of the case, was suffered to suspend the unrelenting severity of the sentence. Let me ask the advocates for the exclusive system, whether they would be moved for a moment to extend their indulgence to a solitary individual, who differed from them on the subject of baptism, although he was so circumstanced as to render a union with other classes of Christians impossible?

This writer affirms, it is not *intended* as a punishment by the Baptists, and strongly remonstrates against the confounding it with the sentence of excommunication, on account of immoral delinquency. He concurs with the author of *Terms of Communion* in admitting that in these instances, its "accordance with the mor-

al nature of man, may and does give it authority and weight ; in such an instance as the incestuous person at Corinth, it becomes an instrument of punishment. He was *in* the church, and could be expelled *from it*. But which way the censure or punishment of excommunication and expulsion can take place in one who never was in a society, the strict Baptists," he tells us, "have yet to learn." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 60.)

In reply to this, I shall not descend to a tedious logomachy, farther than just to remark, that this writer has on this occasion fallen into a similar error, respecting the meaning of words with his former. Excommunication is synonymous with exclusion ; and is defined by the highest authority, "an ecclesiastical interdict ; exclusion from the fellowship of the church." (See Johnson.) The punishment it involves is exactly proportioned to the value of the privilege it withholds ; and therefore to affirm that it is not a punishment, is equivalent to the assertion that the fellowship of the church is not a benefit. To withhold privileges and immunities from him who is legally entitled to their possession, must be supposed to be felt with a severity proportioned to the justice of his title, and the magnitude and extent of his privations.

By refusing to admit a Pædobaptist to the privilege of communion with *us*, we in fact do affirm his incompetence to commune any where ; we deprive him, as far as our influence extends, of all the advantages which result from the fellowship of the saints ; and that he is not reduced to the situation of an outcast and an exile from the church, is in no degree to be imputed to the lenity of our decision, but to the limitation of our power. It is surely not necessary to multiply words to prove, that the equity of every judicial sentence must be ascertained by considering it, as it is *in itself* ; by exploring its tendency ; not by adverting to a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, which may possibly mitigate or extinguish the evils with which it is fraught. In the present instance, we must, in order to form an accurate judgement, make the supposition, that the sentence of excommunication actually operates in its full extent, so as to deprive the subject of it of all the consolation and benefit resulting from the union of Christians ; we must suppose that no asylum is left to which he can retreat, no community remaining, where he can hide his humiliation and his shame. For that there is any, is solely to be ascribed to the prevalence of a system which our opponents are accustomed to stigmatize as erroneous, and for the existence of which, it is not to be imagined, therefore, they will assume to themselves the smallest credit. Let us imagine, what Mr. Kinghorn will probably be among the first to anticipate, that the sentiments of the Baptists triumphed to such an extent, as to be embraced by dissenting churches in gen-

eral, and that the opposite views were retained only by a few individuals; let us suppose one of the latter description to possess the zeal, the humility, the devotion of a Brainerd; and that on account of his being unable to perceive the nullity of infant baptism, he were shut out from every religious society within his reach, though acknowledged to possess an elevation of character, which threw the virtues of others into the shade; would there be no hardship, no injustice in this case? Would it be sufficient to silence the murmurs of indignation to remark, that it was not *intended as a punishment*, that he had nothing to complain of; for "as he was never *in* the church, he could not be expelled *from* it?" Would such cold and trivial subtleties, were they as correct as they are erroneous, quell the instinctive cry of justice, demanding a satisfactory reason for placing the friend, and the enemy of God, the devoted servant of Christ, and the avowed despiser of the great salvation, on the same level, and comprehending them in one and the same sweeping censure? If these characters are totally opposed, not merely by the contrast exhibited between the vices of the world, and the virtues it is most prone to admire; but in consequence of the possession, by one of the parties, of supernatural and sanctifying grace; where is the equity of confounding them together by the interdict of religious privileges; and if the door is opened at the same time for the admission into the church, of persons of a character decidedly inferior, how can impartial justice be asserted to hold the scale, and determine the merits of the respective candidates; justice, whose office it is to appreciate the rival claims of competitors, and to impart to every one his due? The iniquity of such a mode of procedure is so obvious and striking, that it is no wonder we find our opponents exert their ingenuity to the utmost, in attempting to palliate and disguise it; though the issue of their attempts is only to plunge them deeper in perplexity and contradiction.

The author of "Terms of Communion," had remarked, "that there was no difference with respect to the present inquiry, betwixt the refusal of a candidate, and the expulsion of a member, since nothing could justify the former of these measures, which might not be equally alleged in vindication of the latter. *Both* amount to a declaration of the parties being unworthy to communicate." To this Mr. Kinghorn replies, by observing that "in one case the party is declared unworthy from *moral delinquency*; in the other, he is not declared *unworthy* but *unqualified*." Here it is plainly conceded that Pædobaptists are not refused on a *moral* ground; whence it necessarily follows, that even supposing they were acquitted from all blame in practising infant baptism, their exclusion would still be justifiable. They are not repelled from

the sacrament, it seems, on account of any breach of duty of which they are guilty ; for to assert this, would be to contradict himself, by resting their exclusion on their *moral delinquency*. They incur the forfeiture of all the privileges of the church, for no fault whatever ; and whether they be perfectly free from blame or not, in the adoption of an unauthorized rite, is a consideration totally foreign to the question, and it is not to be taken into the account, in assigning the reasons for their non-admission. Let the reader seriously ponder this extraordinary concession ; let him ask himself, whether he is prepared to believe that, in consistence with the genius of the gospel, the most extensive forfeiture of religious immunities can be incurred without guilt, and the heaviest ecclesiastical censure inflicted on the innocent. He will doubtless reject such a supposition with unmingled disgust ; he will feel no hesitation in deciding that the error which prohibits a church from *recognizing* the person to whom it is ascribed, as a *Christian*, which Mr. Kinghorn expressly applies to infant baptism, must incur a high degree of culpability in the eyes of him who judgeth righteous judgement.

The glaring inconsistency of this whole statement, with the preceding assertions of the same writer, is palpable and obvious. He entirely concurs with Mr. Booth, in characterizing Pædobaptists as persons, “ who do not revere Christ’s authority, submit to his ordinances, nor obey the laws of his house.” But how will he attempt to distinguish his charge from that of moral delinquency ? Again, quoting the declaration of St. Paul, that “ the kingdom of God consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ;” he adds, “ now as far as the kingdom of God consists in *righteousness*, it must include obedience to practical precepts, both moral, and positive. (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 46.) We have an eminent instance, of submission to John’s baptism being called righteousness by our Lord.” But if the Pædobaptists are justly chargeable with want of *righteousness*, and on that account, are not entitled to Christian fellowship, they must certainly be excluded on the ground of *moral delinquency*. If on the other hand, the deficiency of righteousness involved in the practice of infant baptism, is not sufficient to justify such a treatment, the reasoning in the above passage is utterly futile. By denying that they are excluded on the ground of *moral delinquency*, at the same time that he imputes to them, conduct highly criminal, he has involved himself in inextricable difficulties ; since supposing it could be proved to a demonstration, that they did “ not revere the authority of Christ,” &c. he has deprived himself of the power of urging it in vindication of his system, by protesting against the supposition of his resting its operation on moral considerations. But if no

guilt is implied in these charges, why are they adduced ; and if there be, how is that to be distinguished from moral delinquency ? He tells us they are not *unworthy*, but only *disqualified* ; whence it follows, that in his opinion, he may be worthy of communion, who “ does not revere the authority of Christ ;” nor would it be possible to dispute his title, were he but *qualified*.

In adopting this system, he professes to obey the directions, and to imitate the conduct of the Supreme Legislator, whom he affirms not to have received the unbaptized, into the gospel dispensation. If this profession is sincere, he surely will not deny that it is his intention to proceed on the same grounds, and act from the same motive, with the great Head of the Church.

But when by refusing to admit them into the Christian dispensation, he virtually declares them *disqualified*, which is the doctrine of this writer, is it under the character of *innocent persons*, or of delinquents ? Will he affirm that the benefits of that economy are withheld from any who have, by no act, deserved that privation ? Is the sentence by which their disqualification is incurred, capricious and arbitrary, or is it merited ? To say it is not, would be impious ; and to affirm that it *is*, is to contradict himself by founding it after all on moral considerations, or which is perfectly equivalent, on “ moral delinquency.”

The distinction then which he has attempted to establish betwixt being *unworthy*, and being *disqualified*, is perfectly nugatory ; and the persons to whom it is applied, though they may not be *unworthy* in other respects, must be acknowledged to be such, on account of that particular instance of disobedience, for which they are disqualified. Their disobedience places them on a footing with other classes of delinquents, by shutting them out from the communion of saints. They incur the same forfeiture, and for the same general reason, want of practical compliance with the will of Christ. They are defective, to use this author’s own language, in the *righteousness* of the kingdom ; and though they possess faith, they fail in exhibiting obedience.

The objections formerly urged against this system, consequently return in their full force. Since the exclusion of Pædobaptists must, after every possible evasion, be founded on their supposed demerits, if these are necessarily and intrinsically equal to the moral imperfections which are tolerated in Baptist societies, it is just. If among the millions who have practised infant baptism, the most eminent saint whom past ages have produced, is to be considered as more criminal on that account, than the crowd of imperfect Christians whom we admit without scruple into our churches, the charge of injustice must be relinquished. Unless this can be sustained, it remains undiminished and unimpaired.

The method by which Mr. Kinghorn attempts to parry this reasoning, is a recurrence to his old sophism, which consists of confounding together things totally distinct, namely, a refusal to *partake* in objectionable rites, with the exclusion from our communion of such as embrace them. Here he takes occasion to affirm that the same objection may be made to our secession from the Romish, as from the Established Church.*

Did we repel men of unquestionable piety on account of their avowed attachment to the peculiarities of a sect or party, there would be a propriety in identifying our practice with that of our opponents; for in that case we should both act on the same principle. But in refusing to join in a communion, accompanied by appendages which we conscientiously disapprove, we proceed on a totally *different* ground. We recede just as far as a moral necessity dictates, and no farther. Nor is it true, as this writer asserts, that this mode of proceeding implies as severe a censure on the societies from which we dissent, as the practice which we are opposing, inflicts on Pædobaptists. He who conceives that the posture of kneeling is an unauthorized innovation on the primitive mode of celebrating the Eucharist, must necessarily dissent from the church which prescribes it: but will it be affirmed that his doing so, implies a conviction that the adherents to that rite are universally disqualified for fellowship, that they are not entitled to be acknowledged Christians, or that they are so deficient in the *righteousness* in which the kingdom of God consists, as to invalidate their profession, and exclude them from the Christian dispensation? But these are the charges urged against the Pædobaptists. Let the smallest error imaginable be so incorporated with the terms of communion, that an explicit assent to it is implied in that act; and he who discerns it to be an error, must, if he is conscientious, dissent, and establish a separate communion; but are there any prepared to assert, that this is precisely the same thing as to repel the person who embraces it, from the Lord's table? 1

* "The imposition of rites," says Mr. Kinghorn, "which Christ has not commanded, and the combination of those sentiments with the structure of the church, which we think injurious to its nature, and contrary to the will of the Lord, have rendered it necessary for us to establish a *separate communion*. Here the fact is, that we feel ourselves called upon to say, that we can have no fellowship with them in communion at the Lord's table. On this ground, it would be a very easy thing to represent the conduct of Protestants, and of Protestant Dissenters, in the same dark coloring, as Mr. Hall has applied to the strict Baptists. Let a man of talent exclaim against them for departing from the *true church*; and represent their conduct in establishing a communion of their own, as declaring in the strongest form, that they deem others unworthy of their society, and that, in so doing, they pronounce the sentence of expulsion, &c., and he will do no more than Mr. Hall has done in the whole of this part of his reasoning."—*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 63.

am weary and ashamed of being under the necessity of occupying the reader's attention with the exposure of such obvious fallacies. Suffice it to remark, once for all, that our dissent from the Establishment is founded on the necessity of departing from a communion, to which certain corruptions, in our apprehension, inseparably adhere ; while we welcome the pious part of that community to that celebration of the Eucharist which we deem unexceptionable. We recede from *their* communion from necessity, but we feel no scruple in admitting them to *ours* ; while our strict brethren reject them, as well as every other description of Pædobaptists altogether. On him who has no discernment to perceive, or candor to acknowledge, the difference betwixt these methods of proceeding, all further reasoning would be wasted.

One more evasion must be noticed before we conclude this part of the subject. "The Pædobaptists are represented as chargeable with nothing more than a *misconception* of the nature of a positive institute. But this, it is observed, is *not* the question before us ; the present controversy relates to the *institute itself*. It is *not* whether the members of a church have fully and properly conceived the nature of the institute, to which they have submitted. If this were the case, we might be represented as expelling the ignorant and the weak, instead of instructing and encouraging them. But it is whether an institute delivered by Christ is to be maintained, or to be given up." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 63.)

To this I reply—The advocates of infant baptism are either sincerely of opinion that the rite in question ought to be extended to infants, or they are guilty of prevarication. If there be any of the last description to be found, they are entirely out of the question, for, supposing their character ascertained, they have never been contemplated as proper objects of toleration. With respect to the former, who sincerely believe it was the intention of our Lord to extend the rite of baptism to the infant seed of believers, is it possible for them to act otherwise than they do? With what then are they chargeable, except with a misconception of a positive institute ; and if we are not to repel the ignorant and the weak, we must either affirm that they are not ignorant in this particular, and thus accuse them, contrary to the supposition, of wilful prevarication, or we must tolerate them. Though we are far from insinuating that our Pædobaptist brethren are in general either ignorant or weak, yet as ignorance and weakness are undoubtedly adequate to the production of any *misconception*, on the subject of religion not fundamental, they will consequently account for the error which has given birth to infant baptism ; and just as far as it is capable of being ascribed to this source, its abettors are, by our au-

thor's concession, objects of forbearance. And since there is no medium, but all Pædobaptists, however discerning in other respects, must either be supposed ignorant in this particular, or to prevaricate; forbearance must be extended to as many of them as are deemed sincere; beyond which, we are as unwilling to extend it as he is. While they entertain their present views on the subject of baptism, they must either administer it to infants, or violate the dictates of conscience; and therefore, if they are *chargeable* with any thing more than a *misconception*, the matter of that charge must be deduced from their acting like upright men; an accusation, which we hope for the honor of human nature, will proceed from none but strict Baptists.

The sum of what has been advanced on this head is, that the privation of communion is an evil, exactly proportioned to the value of that benefit; that as far as the tendency of the exclusive system is concerned, and to the utmost power of its abettors, the evil is extended to every denomination except one; that it is either inflicted on account of *moral delinquency*, or is utterly unmerited; since if that ground be relinquished, their exclusion must be asserted to be just, even supposing them perfectly innocent; that whatever *blame* may be imputed, bears no proportion to that which incurs the forfeiture of the same privilege, in other instances; nor to the faults and imperfections which are daily tolerated without scruple; and finally, since the practice which is treated with so much severity, is the necessary result of a *misconception* of the nature of a positive institute, which is only another name for ignorance or weakness in that particular, to make it the pretext of expulsion or excommunication, is repugnant to the maxims even of our opponents.

CHAPTER X.

On the contrariety of the maxims and sentiments of the advocates of strict communion to those which prevailed in the early ages; in which the innovation imputed to them by the author is vindicated from the charge of misrepresentation.

IN order to comprehend the true state of the question, as it respects the practice of Christian antiquity, it may be convenient to distribute it into three periods; the first, including the time during which correct sentiments on the subject of baptism universally prevailed; the second, that in which a gradual transition was made

from the practice of adult, to that of infant baptism ; the third, the period in which the latter obtained a general and almost undisputed ascendancy.

On the first of these periods little needs to be said. Where there are no dissimilar elements, there can be no mixture ; and therefore to affirm that the practice we are contending for, was unknown in the earliest ages of the Christian church, is little more than an identical proposition. While no demur or dispute subsisted, respecting either the form, or the application of the baptismal rite, a punctual compliance with it was expected and enforced by the presidents of Christian societies, for precisely the same reason which suggested a similar mode of proceeding to the Apostles. It was a part of the will of Christ, in the interpretation of which, no division of opinions subsisted among the faithful. The next period is that, during which an innovation was gradually introduced, by extending the ceremony in question to infants—a period which, from the commencement of the third, unto the close of the fourth, probably comprehended the space of two centuries. Supposing the modern practice to have been first introduced towards the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century, which corresponds to the time at which it is distinctly noticed by Tertullian, the first writer who explicitly mentions it, we cannot suppose a shorter space was requisite to procure it that complete establishment and ascendancy, which it possessed in the time of St. Austin. During that long interval there must have been some, who still adhered to the primitive practice, and others, who favored and adopted the more recent innovations ; there must, in other words, have been Baptists and Pædobaptists cotemporary with each other. What became of that portion of the ancient church, which refused to adopt the baptism of infants ? Did they separate from their brethren, in order to form distinct and exclusive societies ? Of this, not the faintest trace or vestige is to be found in ecclesiastical history ; and the supposition is completely confuted, by the concurrent testimony of ancient writers to the universal incorporation of orthodox Christians into one grand community. We challenge our opponents to produce the shadow of evidence in favor of the existence, during that long tract of time, of a single society, of which adult baptism was the distinguishing characteristic. Tertullian, it is acknowledged, is the first who distinctly and unequivocally adverts to the contrary practice ; and as he expresses disapprobation of it at the same time, without the remotest intimation of the propriety of making it the ground of separation, he must be allowed to form one instance of the practice of mixed communion ; and unless we are disposed to assert that the modern innovation in the rite of baptism supplanted the

original ordinance at once, multitudes must have been in precisely the same situation. We well know, that in the latter period of his life, he *did* secede from the orthodox catholic church ; but we are equally certain, that he was moved to this measure, not by his disapprobation of infant baptism, but solely by his attachment to the Montanists.

We therefore offer our opponents the alternative, either of affirming, that the transition from the primitive, to the modern usage, was sudden and instantaneous, in opposition to all that observation suggests respecting the operations of mind ; or of acknowledging, that for two centuries the predecessors of the present Baptists unanimously approved and practised a mixed communion—a communion in which Baptists and Pædobaptists united in the same societies.

Thus it appears that the system we are advocating, instead of being, as Booth and Kinghorn assert, a “modern invention,” was introduced as early as it was possible—as early as the dissimilar materials existed, of which the combination under discussion is formed. It is evident that no sooner did a difference of opinion on the subject of baptism arise, than the system of forbearance recommended itself at once, to all who adhered to the sentiments of the modern Baptists throughout every part of the world ; and that it is the opposite principle which has to contend with all the odium and suspicion attached to recent innovations.

When we descend to the third period, we are presented with a new scene. After the commencement of the fourth century, down to the era of the Reformation, the baptism of infants was firmly established, and prevailed to such an extent, that few traces of the ordinance in its primitive state, are to be discerned. Many of the Waldenses, however, are judged with great appearance of evidence, to have held opinions on that subject, coincident with those by which we, as a denomination, are distinguished. By their persecutors of the Romish community they were usually stigmatized and reproached for holding the Anabaptist heresy ; while it appears, on the contrary, that there were not wanting among them some who practised the baptism of infants.* These opposite statements, exhibited with equal confidence, on this obscure branch of ecclesiastical history, are best reconciled and accounted for, by supposing them divided in their sentiments on that particular.

* See “The History of the Baptists,” by Mr. Ivimey, in which this subject is discussed with much care and impartiality. To those who wish for information respecting many curious and important circumstances, connected with the progress of the Baptist opinions, I would earnestly recommend the perusal of that valuable work ; for which the public at large, and our own denomination in particular, are much indebted to the pious and laborious author.

No indication, however, is discoverable of a rupture in external communion having occurred on that account; and from the acknowledged difficulty of ascertaining the separate existence of Baptist societies, during the middle ages, and until the period of the Reformation, the necessary inference is, either that there were none, during that interval, who adhered to the primitive institute, or, as is far more probable, that they were mingled and incorporated with persons of another persuasion.

Hence, it is manifest that the concurrent testimonies of the Fathers of the three or four first centuries, in proof of the necessity of baptism, to church fellowship, are urged to no purpose whatever, unless it could be shown that there was no mixed communion, no association of the advocates of adult, with the patrons of Pædobaptism, known in those ages; a supposition which is at direct variance with facts. Nor is it at all difficult to assign a satisfactory reason for that combination of testimonies, which the writings of the Fathers supply in favor of the essential connexion of the two ordinances. The scanty writings which remain of the authors of the second century, afford no decisive indication of the existence of infant baptism, in the period in which they flourished; and during the third, the few authors whose works have descended to us, appear, with the exception of Tertullian, to have imbibed the Pædobaptist persuasion. It was natural for the first class of these Fathers, who lived at a time when no doubt or dispute had arisen on the subject to insist on a compliance with that ordinance: nor was it possible for the second, who extended baptism to infants, and considered it as the indispensable means of regeneration, to pursue another course.

That there was a mixture of persons of different persuasions in Christian societies, during the period to which we have adverted, appears to be an unquestionable fact; but in what manner those who adhered to the primitive institution reasoned on the subject, as they have left no writings behind them, or none which touch on this subject, must be left to conjecture. Whether they defended their conduct on precisely the same principles with ourselves, or whether they considered Pædobaptism as not so properly nullifying, as corrupting or enfeebling a Christian ordinance, it is to little purpose to inquire. It is sufficient for us to know, that the practice which is stigmatized as *modern*, existed as early as a difference of opinion on the subject arose.

In my former treatise, I had remarked "that the decision of Christian writers that baptism, in some form or other, must necessarily precede the celebration of the eucharist, supposing it ever so unanimous, affords but a feeble proof, since it assumes for its basis the impossibility of the universal prevalence of error." The

truth of this assertion is almost self-evident ; for if it be possible for error to prevail universally, what should prevent the possibility of its doing so, in this particular instance ? “No,” says our author, “it assumes a very different principle ; that the human mind in all its wanderings never took this direction before.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 145.) But what is the difference betwixt affirming that the opinion which separates the title to communion, from baptism, was unknown until it was adopted by the advocates of mixed communion, and asserting “that the human mind never took this direction before.” Are they any thing more than two different modes of expressing the same proposition ? To say then that the argument in question assumes for its basis “that the human mind never took this direction before,” is to say that it assumes itself, a method of reasoning most repugnant to the rules of logic, however familiar with this writer.

He feels very indignant at my affirming that the right of excluding persons of unquestionable worth and piety was never claimed by antiquity. In opposition to this, he adduces the example of Cyprian, who insisted on the rebaptization of heretics and schismatics, previously to their reception into the body of the faithful. If it be considered, however, in what light heretics and schismatics were contemplated by that celebrated Father, the objection vanishes ; since no doubt can be entertained, that their preceding profession of Christianity was considered by him as a mere nullity, their faith fundamentally erroneous, the privileges they supposed themselves to possess, a vain illusion, and the entire system of their religion, an abomination in the sight of God. We find him every where exerting his utmost powers of language, which were by no means inconsiderable, in stigmatizing their character, and degrading their pretensions. Having little taste for quotation, the following passages may suffice to convince the reader, under what opprobrious colors he was accustomed to represent that description of professors. It is proper just to premise, that on their manifesting a disposition to return to the Catholic Church, while Cyprian contended for the necessity of their being rebaptized before they were admitted, his opponent Stephen insisted on the sufficiency of recantation, accompanied with imposition of hands, (Cypriani Epistolæ, p. 210. Oxonii, anno 1682.) without reiterating a rite, which he concluded could not be repeated without profanation. The latter opinion, in spite of the high authority of the African Father, being confirmed by the Council of Nice, became the received doctrine of the church, and the opposite tenet was finally denounced as heresy. But to return to Cyprian—“We,” said he, “affirm,” referring to the Novatians, who were esteemed schismatics, “that those who come to us are not rebap-

tized, but baptized. For neither do they receive any thing, where there is nothing ; but they come to us, that they may receive here, where all grace and truth are." (Cypriani Epistolæ, p. 194.) After stigmatizing the baptism of schismatics, as "a filthy and profane dipping," he complains, that certain of his colleagues "did not consider that it was written, he who is baptized by the dead, what profit does he derive from his washing? But it is manifest that they who are not in the church, are numbered among the dead, and cannot be quickened by him who is not alive ; since there is one only church, which having obtained the grace of eternal life, both lives for ever, and quickens the people of God." (Cypriani Epistolæ, p. 194.)

Speaking of heretics, he makes a distinction betwixt such as having been members of the catholic church, fell into heresy for a time, but were afterwards recovered ; and such as sprang originally from them. With respect to the latter, he says, "If he who comes from the heretics has not been before baptized in the church, but comes entirely alien and profane, he is to be baptized, that he may become a sheep, because the only holy water which can make sheep is in the church." In another epistle, we find him reasoning in the following manner :—"The very interrogation," he says, "which takes place in baptism, bears witness to the truth. Dost thou believe in eternal life, and the remission of sins by the holy church? We mean by it that the remission of sins is given only in the church ; but among heretics where the church is not, sins cannot be remitted. Let them therefore who plead for heretics, (that is, for their admission into the church without rebaptizing) either alter the interrogation, or vindicate the truth ; unless they are disposed to give the appellation of the church, to those whom they assert to possess true baptism." (Cypriani Epistolæ, p. 194.)

His epistles are full of similar sentiments. What resemblance, let me ask, are they perceived to bear to the principles on which strict communion is founded ; or who will be so absurd as to affirm that the example of Cyprian, in rejecting the communion of persons whom he esteemed spiritually dead, and incapacitated for receiving the remission of sins, affords the least countenance for treating in a similar manner such as are acknowledged to possess the most eminent and exalted piety? "True," Mr. Kinghorn replies, "but when they requested admission into the catholic orthodox church, they had ceased to be heretics or schismatics, since they left the societies where heresy was professed, acknowledged their former error, and requested to be numbered with the orthodox. Notwithstanding this, however, Cyprian insisted on their being rebaptized." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p.

152.) But why did he insist upon it? He tells us himself, it was because "they had received nothing; they were baptized by the dead;" they wanted "that holy water peculiar to the church, which alone can vivify;" and their pretended baptism, or, to use his own words, "their profane dipping," was necessarily unaccompanied with the remission of sins. In short, however well they might be disposed, and prepared on the application of due means, for the reception of the highest benefits, they were, as yet, in his estimation, in a state of unregeneracy. Hence the reader may judge of the pertinence and correctness of the subsequent remark:—"Their interest in the blessings of the Christian covenant," says Mr. Kinghorn, "was not doubted, yet their right to the Lord's supper was doubted, because the validity of their baptism was questioned." (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 154.) "*Their interest in the blessings of the covenant was not doubted,*" although Cyprian declares his conviction "that they had received nothing, that their baptism was a nullity, that they wanted the only water which could quicken, and that, instead of it, they had received only a "sordid and profane dipping, which could not be accompanied with the remission of sins."

The reader will be at no loss to determine which of us is justly chargeable with "taking the present state of opinion, and of applying it to former ages;" when he perceives that my opponent is so possessed with these ideas, as to be utterly incapable of contemplating the sentiments of Cyprian through the right medium. He entirely forgets the importance he attached to baptism as a regenerating ordinance; and his denial that the persons of whom he was treating, had received it; which, combined together, must necessarily have placed them, in his estimation, at the utmost remove from the situation in which pious Pædobaptists are at present considered.

His opponent, Stephen, contended for the propriety of receiving them without a repetition of that rite, because he already conceived it had been truly and solidly performed; this Cyprian denied; and the only question in debate, respected the validity of a ceremony, which both equally esteemed to be the necessary means of regeneration. Upon the principles common to both, the African Father reasoned with most consistency; for how could heretics and schismatics, who were acknowledged to be spiritually dead, communicate life by the performance of a ceremony; and how totally incongruous to suppose every part of their religious service devoid of vitality and force, except their baptism, by which, as Cyprian continually urges, they were supposed to confer that renovating spirit, which in every other instance they were denied to possess. But whatever judgement may be formed of

the merits of this controversy, nothing can be more impertinent to the question at issue betwixt my opponent and myself, which is simply, whether the refusal to admit persons of unquestioned piety into the church, was the doctrine of the Ancient Fathers. In proof of this, he alleges the example of Cyprian, who contended for the necessity of rebaptizing such as had been already reclaimed from heresy and schism. Now if Cyprian's ideas on the subject of baptism had been the same, or in any degree similar to those which are at present entertained, the objection would have been forcible; but when we learn from his own mouth, that his demand was founded on their not having been "quickened," on their wanting "the water of life," on their not having approached the fountain of renovation and pardon; in a word, on their still remaining unregenerate; what can be conceived more futile than to adduce his authority for refusing a class of persons, to whom, it is acknowledged, none of these objections apply? Let us first insist on the admission of those, whom we believe to be destitute of regeneration and pardon, and we must dispose of the authority of Cyprian as we can; but till that is the case, however we differ from him in its application, we act on one and the same principle.

Mr. Kinghorn is very anxious to prevent his readers from being led to suppose, from certain passages I had quoted, that he was a friend to mixed communion. If he means by this, that he was not disposed to admit into the church, such as were on all hands acknowledged to be unbaptized, his opinion is undoubtedly correct; nothing was more remote from my intention, than to insinuate the contrary. But if it is his intention to affirm, that Cyprian was averse to the mixture of Baptists and Pædobaptists at the Lord's table, he must be supposed to assert, that there were none in his communion who adhered to what we conceive the primitive institute; and considering the extensive influence which he derived from his station as Metropolitan of Africa, and the celebrity of his character, this is equivalent to an admission, that it had totally disappeared from that province as early as the middle of the third century; a dangerous concession, as well as a most improbable supposition. It is to suppose that a corruption (as we must necessarily deem it) of a Christian ordinance, the explicit mention of which, first occurs but fifty years before, had already spread with such rapidity through Africa, as to efface every trace and relic of the primitive practice. It is unnecessary to observe the important advantage which such a concession would yield in the controversy with Pædobaptists. The truth is, that unless we are disposed to admit that the baptism of infants had already totally supplanted the original ordinance, throughout the Catholic church, Cyprian

must be allowed to have patronized mixed communion in precisely the same sense, in which it is countenanced at present by our Pædobaptist brethren.

This may suffice to rescue me from the charge of misrepresenting the sentiments of Cyprian; an accusation which excited so much surprise, that I determined to re-peruse the epistles of that celebrated writer; but after carefully reading every line, I most solemnly declare, that I feel at a loss to discover a shadow of ground for this imputation.

It is not however the sentiments of Cyprian only that I am charged with misrepresenting; the Donatists, it is affirmed, proceeded on the same views, when they insisted on the necessity of re-baptizing the members of the Catholic church. "They acted," he says, "exactly on the same principles which Mr. Hall reprobates." That principle, it is unnecessary to repeat, is the propriety, not of baptizing such as have been induced through misconception, to neglect the valid performance of that rite, which is our uniform practice; but the exclusion of those, against whom nothing is alleged, besides the invalidity of their baptism. But nothing can be more remote from the ground on which the Donatists proceeded. They conceived the whole Christian world contaminated by their communion with the African traditors;* that they had fallen into a state of deep and deadly corruption, and so far were they from founding the separation on the insufficiency of their baptism, that they inferred its invalidity solely from the mortal contagion they were deemed to have contracted, and from the abominations they were supposed to tolerate.† They considered the church of Christ, as far as the Catholic societies were concerned, as extinct; and on that account were vehemently urged by St. Austin to reconcile their hypothesis with the promise made to Abraham, "that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed." But will any Pædobaptist be found so absurd, as to press the advocates of strict communion with a similar argument? And will it after this be contended, that the conduct of the Donatists, in refusing to admit the baptism of men, whom they viewed as plunged in a state of hopeless degeneracy, bears any resemblance to the conduct of those, who repel such as they affect to regard as the most excellent of the earth?

This writer is highly offended with my presuming to express a conviction, that the advocates of strict communion have violated

* Those who delivered up the sacred writings.

† Dicit enim Parmenianus, hinc probari consceleratum fuisse orbem terrarum criminibus traditionis, et aliorum sacrilegiorum: quia cum multa alia fuerint tempore persecutionis admissa, nulla propterea facta est in ipsis provinciis separatio populorum."—*Contra Epistolam Parmeniani, Augustini, Lib. 1.*

more maxims of antiquity, than any other sect upon record. The extent to which they have carried their deviation in one particular is already sufficiently obvious. Mr. Kinghorn was challenged to produce an instance of an ancient Father, who contended for the right of repelling a genuine Christian from the eucharist. He adduced the example of Cyprian, and of the Donatists; and by this time we presume the intelligent reader is at no loss to perceive how completely these instances have failed.

A writer of his undisputed learning, would doubtless select the strongest case; we may therefore, until he fortifies his positions better, venture without hesitation to enumerate among other deviations, the pretended right of excluding such as are acknowledged to be genuine Christians. In ancient times, the limits of communion were supposed to be co-extensive with those of visible Christianity, and none excluded from the Catholic church, but those whom that church deemed heretics or schismatics. Our opponents proceed on an opposite principle; they exclude myriads whom they would not dare to stigmatize with either appellation. In ancient times, the necessity of baptism, as a qualification for communion, was avowedly and uniformly founded on its supposed essential connexion with salvation; our opponents have totally relinquished that ground, yet still assert with equal vehemence the same necessity, and absurdly urge the shadow, or rather the skeleton of ancient precedent, after they had disembowelled it, and divested it of its very soul and spirit. In ancient times, the whole mass of human population was distributed into two classes, the church and the world; all who were deemed incapable of admission to the first, were considered as belonging to the last.

The advocates of strict communion have invented a new classification, a division of mankind into the world, the church, by which they mean themselves, and an immense body of pious Pædobaptists, who are comprised in neither of the preceding classes, their charity forbidding them to place them with the former, and their peculiar principles with the latter. Were they to assign them to the world, they would at once declare them out of the pale of salvation; were they to acknowledge them a part of the church, they would convict themselves of the crime of schism, in repelling them from communion. In attempting to designate this class of Christians, compared to which *their* numbers dwindle into impalpable insignificance, they are reduced to the utmost perplexity. On the one hand, they contend that they are not entitled to be considered as disciples; on the other, they loudly proclaim the confidence they entertain of their ready admission into heaven. They are acknowledged to possess faith in an eminent degree, yet it is denied that they have afforded any legitimate evidence of

it; and though *out of the church*, it is confessed it would be the height of bigotry to pretend to invalidate their religious pretensions; to recognize their validity *in it*, would be an equal impropriety. It is unnecessary to say how far these maxims deviate from Christian antiquity; nor is it easy to conceive the astonishment their avowal would have excited in the breast of the Cyprians and the Austins—I might add, of the Apostles and Evangelists of a former age. Guided by the simple dictates of inspiration, accustomed to contemplate the world under two divisions only, that of believers and of unbelievers, they would doubtless have felt themselves at an utter loss to comprehend the possibility of the existence of an equivocal race, who are to be treated as heathens *in the church*, and as Christians *out of it*; and while they possess whatever is necessary for an instant translation to glory, are disqualified for the possession of the most ordinary privileges of the church.

As it is the province of poetry to give to “airy nothings a local habitation and a name,” if we cannot eulogize the reason of our opponents, we willingly allow them all the praise of a creative fancy, due to the invention of so bold a fiction.

The unity of the church is not merely a tenet of antiquity, but a doctrine of Scripture, to which great importance is attached by the inspired writers. Wherever the word occurs, without being applied to a particular society, the idea of *unity* is strictly preserved, by the invariable use of the singular number; the great community denoted by it, is styled the *body of Christ*, of which every believer is declared to be a particular member; (1 Eph. 22: 23. Col. 1: 24;) and the perfect *oneness* of the whole is solemnly and repeatedly attested. “The bread which we break,” says St. Paul, “is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many, are *one* bread and *one* body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17.) “Now ye,” says he in the same Epistle, “are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

This grand and elevating conception of the unity which characterizes the Christian church, was ever present to the minds of the Fathers, and never do they rise to a higher strain of manly and impressive eloquence than when they are expatiating on this theme. Thus we find Irenæus celebrating that “church which was disseminated throughout the whole world, to the very ends of the earth, which carefully preserved the preaching and the faith she had once received, as though she resided in one house; and proclaimed, and taught, and delivered the same doctrine, as though she possessed but one soul, one heart, and one mouth.” (Irenæus, Lib. i. c. 2, 3.) “Every kind,” says Tertullian,

"must be referred to its origin. So many and so great churches as now subsist, are that one church, founded by the Apostles, from which they all derive. Thus all are first, and apostolical, while they retain the relation of peace, the appellation of fraternity, and the symbol of hospitality ; which rights are regulated by no other principle, than the tradition of the same creed." (Tertullian *De Præscriptione Hereticorum*, p. 209.—*Lutetiæ Parisiorum*, 1675.) Cyprian, comparing the church to the sun, affirms, that while she extends her rays through the whole world, it is yet one light, which is every where diffused ; nor is the unity of the body separated : her exuberant fertility stretches her branches to the whole earth, she expands her streams most widely, yet the head and origin is one, and it is one mother that is so prolific. Who, says he, is so wicked and perfidious, who so maddened by the fury of discord, as to suppose it possible to divide, or attempt to divide the unity of God, the vestment of Christ, the church of God ? He elsewhere expresses his conviction that he who does not hold the unity of the church, does not hold the faith. (*De Unit. Ecc.* pp. 110, 111.)

During the first centuries, the unity of the church was not a splendid visionary theory ; it was practically exemplified in the habits of reciprocal communion, cultivated and maintained among orthodox societies, through every part of the globe.*

So repugnant, however, is the narrow, exclusive system which we are opposing, to that grand characteristic of the church, that its advocates profess themselves at a loss to comprehend its meaning, except in the arrogant and offensive sense, in which it is sometimes employed to vindicate the pretension of Roman Catholics and High Churchmen. "Is the unity of the church," Mr. Kinghorn asks, "destroyed by nothing but strict communion ?" (*Baptism a Term of Communion*, p. 101.) And suppose it be, what then ? Will it follow that strict communion does *not* destroy it ? Whether it has this effect or not, is the only inquiry ; not whether something else may produce the same effect, in an equal degree. He adds, "is there any sense in which the church of God is, or can be considered as one, in this imperfect state, except in that which will include all those good men, who, from conscientious differences cannot unite together on earth ?" For the conduct of those good men who refuse to unite with us, unless we

* See upon this branch of the subject, the admirable work of Dr. Mason, who, by a copious induction of ancient authorities, has indisputably established the fact, that every portion of the orthodox church formed one communion ; and most ably illustrated the mode of proceeding by which their union was maintained. The depth and accuracy with which he has discussed the subject must be my apology for not entering into it more fully.

consent to the performance of rites which in our estimation are unscriptural and superstitious, they alone are responsible, but where nothing of this nature is prepared, as is the case in the present instance, to deem them *personally* disqualified for communion, and on that ground to refuse it, is totally repugnant to every conception of unity.

In the above passage, the author breaks his mysterious silence, and for the first time acknowledges that all good men are component parts of the church of God, and are consequently members of Christ's mystical body. But he who concedes this, unless he suppose the Scriptures repealed, must confess his obligation to regulate his treatment of those members, by the rules and maxims the New Testament enjoins; which prohibit the least degree of alienation, and assert the equal claim to regard, which each individual, as a part of the body, possesses; inasmuch, that no language, except that which the Holy Ghost has employed, is sufficient adequately to represent that oneness of spirit, that perfect co-operation, that conjunction, or identity rather of interests and affections, which ought to penetrate and pervade the whole. All other unions of a moral nature, are, in reality, lax, feeble, and evanescent, compared with that which joins the members of Christ to each other, and to their Head. But will it be asserted that the practice of strict communion corresponds with these ideas? or that the treatment of the persons whom it excludes, is a practical exemplification of the conduct which the Christians at Corinth were commanded reciprocally to maintain? It will not be pretended; and since these passages, which imperatively enjoin such a behavior on the members of Christ, and expressly and repeatedly assure us that his body is the church, are still in force, the above concession must either be retracted, or a practice so directly subversive of it, be relinquished. If a society, of what description it may be, has by mutual consent selected a ceremony as the symbol of their union, those individuals, who for the express purpose of marking their separation, refuse to perform the ceremony, have most unequivocally renounced that society; and by parity of reason, since the joint celebration of the Lord's supper is established in the church as the discriminating token by which its members are to recognize each other, to refuse to join in it, is equivalent to an express declaration that the persons from whom we withdraw as *personally* disqualified, are not considered as parts of the church. It is acknowledged, however, in the foregoing passage, that all good men belong to it. But if so, they are also members of the body of Christ, and consequently entitled to exactly the same treatment as was enjoined on the Corinthians towards each other. But supposing, in consequence of minor differences of opinion,

the latter had proceeded to an open rupture of communion, and refused to unite in the celebration of the eucharist, will it be asserted that the pathetic and solemn injunctions of their inspired teacher would not have been violated by such a measure? The answer to this question is obvious, and its application to the point under discussion irresistible. The advocates of the exclusive system, on whatever side they turn, are surrounded and pressed with difficulties from which it is utterly impossible for them to escape. To affirm that Pædobaptism is of so malignant a tendency as to sever its patrons from the mystical body of Christ, is at once to impugn their hopes of salvation; since the supposition of a vital efficacy imparted from Christ as the Head, which fails to constitute the subject of it a member, is equally unintelligible and unscriptural. The language adopted on this subject is confessedly figurative, but not on that account obscure. Its foundation is evidently laid in that derivation of spiritual life to the souls of the faithful, for which they are indebted to their union with the Saviour; for which reason, it would be the height of absurdity to refuse the application of the figure on an occasion which comprehends its whole import and meaning. We may therefore with confidence affirm, that all genuine believers are alike members of Christ's body. But if this be admitted, they are as much entitled to the benefit, not merely of admission into the church, but of all those benevolent sympathies and attentions prescribed in the preceding passages, as though they had been mentioned by name; since the only ground on which they are enforced, is the relation the objects of them are supposed to sustain to that body.

Thus we perceive in the principles and practice of our opponents, another glaring instance of gross violation, as well of the dictates of inspiration, as of the maxims of Christian antiquity; both which concur in inculcating the doctrine of the absolute unity of the church, of its constituting Christ's mystical body, and of the horrible incongruity, I might almost say impiety, of attempting to establish a system, which represents a great majority of its members as *personally* disqualified for communion.

Once more, what foundation will they find in ancient precedents, for the peculiar distinction allotted to one particular ceremony, above every other, in consequence of which, they allow the cultivation of the most intimate religious intercourse, of the most perfect intercommunity in every branch of worship, with members of other denominations, providing they do not so far forget themselves, as to lose sight of their disputes at the Lord's table. The Holy Ghost informs us, that the end of Christ's death was to "gather into one the children of God, who were scattered abroad." It seems strange that one of the principal purposes of its celebra-

tion, should be to scatter abroad those children of God, who are gathered together every where else. Be this as it may, we challenge these zealous champions of precedent, to produce the faintest vestige of such a practice in the ages of antiquity ; or to direct us to a single nation, or sect, or individual, for an example of that capricious and arbitrary distinction attached to the eucharist, by which it is refused to an immense multitude, who are considered as entitled to every other mark of Christian fraternity.

These observations, we trust, will be amply sufficient to justify the assertion, that our opponents have violated, with respect to ecclesiastical economy, more maxims of antiquity, than any other sect upon record ; nor will the intelligent reader be at a loss to perceive, that the weight of this censure is little, if at all impaired, by their conformity in one particular, by their insisting upon baptism as a term of communion ; when it is recollected that the principles on which they found it, have no relation whatever to those on which it was maintained by the ancient Fathers. For the length to which this part of the discussion is extended, a natural and laudable anxiety to repel the charge of misrepresentation, will probably be deemed a sufficient apology.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

BEFORE I put a final period to my part in this controversy, the attention of the reader is requested to a few miscellaneous remarks, which naturally arise out of the contemplation of the whole subject.

It is just matter of surprise, that the topic in debate should be regarded by any serious and intelligent Christian, as of small importance. Such a conclusion can only be ascribed to extreme inattention, or to the force of an inveterate, though perhaps latent prejudice, producing an unmerited predilection in favor of certain systems of ecclesiastical polity, which are incapable of sustaining the ordeal of inquiry. That those should shrink from the investigation of such topics, who by receiving their religion from the hands of their superiors in a mass, have already relinquished the liberty of thinking for themselves, is no more than might well be expected. But to minds free and unfettered, accustomed to spurn the shackles of authority ; and above all, to Protestant

Dissenters, whose peculiar boast, is the privilege of following in the organization of their churches, no other guide but the Scriptures—that such subjects should appear of little moment, is truly astonishing. The inquiry first in importance undoubtedly is, what is Christianity? What, supposing the truth of Scripture, is to be believed, and to be done, with a view to eternal life? Happily for the Christian world, there probably never was a time, when, in the solution of this question, so much unanimity was witnessed among the professors of serious piety, as at the present. Systems of religion, fundamentally erroneous, are falling fast into decay; while the subordinate points of difference, which do not affect the primary verities of Christianity, nor the ground of hope, are either consigned to oblivion, or are the subjects of temperate and amicable controversy; and in consequence of their subsiding to their proper level, the former appear in their just and natural magnitude.

Hence, in the present state of the church, externally considered, the evil most to be deplored is, the unnatural distance at which Christians stand from each other; the spirit of sects, the disposition to found their union on the “wood, hay, and stubble” of human inventions, or of disputable tenets, instead of building on the eternal rock, the “faith once delivered to the saints.” They all profess to look forward to a period when these divisions will cease, and there will be one fold under one Shepherd. But while every denomination flatters itself with the persuasion of that fold being its own, the principal use to which the annunciations of prophecy are directed, is to supply a motive for redoubled exertions in the defence and extension of their respective peculiarities; and instead of hailing the dawn of a brighter day, as an event in which all are equally interested, there is reason to fear, it is too often considered, as destined to complete the triumph of a party.

If we consult the Scriptures, we shall be at no loss to perceive, that the unity of the church is not merely a doctrine most clearly revealed, but that its practical exemplification is one of the principal designs of the Christian dispensation. We are expressly told that our Saviour purposed by his death to “gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad;” and for the accomplishment of this design he interceded during his last moments, in language which instructs us to consider it as the grand means of the conversion of the world. His prophetic anticipations were not disappointed; for while a visible unanimity prevailed among his followers, his cause every where triumphed: the concentrated zeal, the ardent co-operation of a comparative few, impelled by one spirit, and directed to one object, were more than a match for hostile myriads. No sooner was the bond of unity broken, by the prevalence of intestine quarrels and dis-

sensions, than the interests of truth languished ; until Mahometanism in the East, and Popery in the West, completed the work of deterioration, which the loss of primitive simplicity and love, combined with the spirit of intolerance, first commenced.

If the religion of Christ ever resumes her ancient lustre, and we are assured by the highest authority she will, it must be by retracing our steps, by reverting to the original principles on which, considered as a social institution, it was founded. We must go back to the simplicity of the first ages ; we must learn to quit a subtle and disputatious theology, for a religion of love, emanating from a few divinely energetic principles, which pervade almost every page of inspiration, and demand nothing for their cordial reception and belief, besides a humble and contrite heart. Reserving to ourselves the utmost freedom of thought, in the interpretation of the sacred oracles, and pushing our inquiries, as far as our opportunities admit, into every department of revealed truth, we shall not dream of obtruding our precarious conclusions on others, as articles of faith ; but shall receive with open arms all who appear to “ love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ;” and find a sufficient bond of union—a sufficient scope for all our sympathies, in the doctrine of the cross. If the Saviour appears to be loved, obeyed, and adored—if his blood is sprinkled on the conscience, and his spirit resides in the heart, why should we be dissatisfied ? *we*, who profess to be actuated by no other motive, to live to no other purpose, than the promotion of his interest.

If the kingdom of Christ, like the kingdoms of this world, admitted of local and discordant interests, and the possession of exclusive privileges ; if it were a system of compromise between the selfish passions of individuals, and the promotion of the general good, the policy of conferring on one class of its subjects, certain advantages and immunities withheld from another, might be easily comprehended. But in this, as well as many other features, it essentially differs. Founded on the basis of a divine equality, its privileges are as free as air ; and there is not a single blessing which it proposes to bestow, but is held by the same tenure, and is capable of being possessed to the same extent, by every believer. The freedom which it confers, is of so high a character, and the dignity to which it elevates its subjects, as the sons of God, so transcendent, that whether they are “ Barbarians or Scythians, bond or free, male or female, they are from henceforth one in Christ Jesus.” In asserting the equal right which the Gentiles possessed, in common with the Jews, to all the privileges attached to the Christian profession, Peter founds his argument on this very principle. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as unto us, and *put no*

difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. In his apprehension, it was God, the Searcher of Hearts, who having by the collation of his Spirit, in his marvellous and sanctifying gifts, made no distinction betwixt the Gentiles and themselves, decided the controversy. If that great Apostle reasoned correctly on the subject, we have only to change the term Gentiles for Pædobaptists, or for any other denomination of sincere Christians, and the inference remains in its full force.

Among other attempts to deter us from pursuing a system established by such high authority, it is extraordinary that we should be reminded of the fearful responsibility we incur. To this topic Mr. Kinghorn has devoted a whole chapter. When it is recollected that we plead for the reception of none whom Christ has not received, for none whose hearts are not purified by faith, and who are not possessed of the same spirit, the communication of which was considered by St. Peter as a decisive proof that *no difference was put between them and others* by God himself, it is easy to determine where the danger lies. Were we to suffer ourselves to lose sight of these principles, and by discountenancing and repelling those whom he accepts, to dispute the validity of his seal, and subject to our miserable scrutiny, pretensions which have passed the ordeal, and received the sanction of him who "understandeth the heart," we should have just reason to tremble for the consequences; and with all our esteem for the piety of many of our opponents, we conceive it no injury or insult, to put up the prayer of our Lord for them—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

He who alters the terms of communion, changes the fundamental laws of Christ's kingdom. He assumes a legislative power, and ought, in order to justify that conduct, to exhibit his credentials, with a force and splendor of evidence, equal at least to those which attested the divine legation of Moses and the Prophets.

It has been frequently observed on this occasion, that every voluntary society possesses the power of determining on the qualifications of its members; and that for the same reason every church is authorized to enact such terms of admission as it shall see fit. This conclusion, however, is illogical and unfounded. There is little or no analogy betwixt the two cases. Human societies originate solely in the private views and inclinations of those who compose them; and as they are not founded on divine institution, so neither are they restricted with respect to the objects they are destined to pursue. The church is a society instituted by Heaven; it is the visible seat of that "kingdom which God has set up;" the laws by which it is governed are of his prescribing, and the purposes which it is designed to accomplish, are limited and ascertained by infinite

wisdom. When, therefore, from its analogy to other societies, it is inferred that it has an equal right to organize itself at its pleasure, nothing can be more fallacious ; unless it be meant merely to assert its exemption from the operation of physical force, which is a view of the subject, with which we are not at present concerned. In every step of its proceedings, it is amenable to a higher than human tribunal ; and on account of its freedom from external control, its obligation in *foro conscientiæ*, exactly to conform to the mandates of Revelation, is the more sacred and the more indispensable ; being loosened from every earthly tie, on purpose that it may be at liberty to “follow the Lord whithersoever he goeth.”

That these maxims, plain and obvious as they must appear, have been too often totally lost sight of, he who has the slightest acquaintance with ecclesiastical history must be aware ; and to their complete abandonment, we are indebted for the introduction of strict communion.

“The Baptists,” Mr. Kinghorn informs us, consider themselves as holding up to notice *one* neglected truth.” (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 69.) Whether they have adopted a mode of proceeding the most likely to accomplish their object, may be justly doubted. Independently, however, of any such consideration, it is the *principle*, thus distinctly avowed, to which we object—the *principle* of organizing a church with a specific view to the propagation of some particular truth ; which is a perversion of the original end and design of Christian societies. Nothing, it is certain, was more remote from the views of their first founders, who aimed at nothing less than to render them the general depositaries of the “faith once delivered to the saints ;” and for this purpose carefully inculcated the whole “truth as it is in Jesus,” along with the duty of preserving it incorrupt and entire ; without the most distant intimation that it was their province to watch over one department, with more vigilance than another ; least of all was it their design to recommend, as the object of preference, an external ceremony, the nature of which was destined to become a subject of debate among Christians.

Let each denomination pursue this plan—let each fix upon the promotion of some one truth, as the specific object of its exertions, and the effect will soon appear, not only in extending the spirit of disunion, but in the injury which the interests of truth itself will sustain. Every denomination will exhibit some portion of it, in a distorted and mutilated form ; none will be in possession of the whole, and the result will be something like the confusion of Babel, where every man spoke in a separate dialect. As the beauty of truth consists chiefly in the harmony and proportion of its sev-

eral parts, it is as impossible to display it to advantage in fragments, as to give a just idea of a noble and majestic structure, by exhibiting a single brick.

What is the consequence which must be expected from teaching an illiterate assembly that the principal design of their union is to extend the practice of a particular ceremony, but to invest it with an undue importance in their eyes, and by tempting them to look upon themselves as Christians of a higher order, to foster an overweening self conceit, to generate selfish passions, and to encourage ambitious projects. Accustomed to give themselves a decided preference above others, to treat with practical contempt the religious pretensions of the best and wisest of men, and to live in an element of separation and exclusion, it would be astonishing indeed, if their humility were not impaired, and the more delicate sympathies of Christian affection almost extinguished. In the situation in which they have placed themselves, they are reduced to a necessity of performing continually those operations, which other denominations reserve for the last extremity; they are familiarized to the infliction of the most formidable sentence, that the church is empowered to pass, and to that excision of the members of Christ from the body, to which others proceed with fear and trembling.

It is freely admitted that there are seasons, when it is the duty of a Christian society, to bend its particular attention to the exhibition and defence of a neglected branch of truth, in order to supply an antidote to the errors by which it may be attempted to be corrupted. There is no fundamental doctrine, which we may not be called upon in an especial manner to maintain, and fortify in its turn. But to make this the specific object of the constitution of a church, is totally different; it is to contract its views, and limit its efforts, in a manner utterly inconsistent with the design of its institution, which is to exhibit both the theory and practice of Christianity, in all its plenitude and extent.

An exception however must be made, where the truth which is said to be neglected, is fundamental. The assertion and vindication of such a truth, is equivalent to the maintenance of Christianity itself, which in common with every other system, is incapable of surviving the destruction of its vital parts. Hence the Reformers were justified in laying the doctrine of justification by faith, as the basis of the reformed religion, because the formal denial of that truth, is incompatible with the existence of a church. But where religious communities have been founded on refined speculations, or on some particular mode of explaining and interpreting disputable tenets the most mischievous consequences have resulted. The people, usually denominated Quakers, set out with the

professed design of exhibiting the doctrine of the Spirit, which they chose to consider as a *neglected* truth, and the consequence has been such a distortion of that momentous doctrine, as has probably contributed not a little to subject it to contempt. The Sandemanians profess to constitute their societies with an express view to the revival of certain *neglected* truths; and the effect, as far as their efforts have succeeded, has been the extinction of vital piety. The High Calvinists, or to speak more properly, the Antinomians, are loud and clamorous in professing their solicitude to revive a certain class of *neglected* truths, and the result of their labor has been to corrupt the few truths they possess, and to consign others of equal importance, to contempt and oblivion. In each of these instances, by detaching particular portions from the system to which it belongs, the continuity of truth has been broken, and that vital communication between its respective parts on which its life and vigor depend, interrupted.

It was reserved for our opponents to pursue the same system under a new form, by selecting the ceremony of baptism as their distinguishing symbol, and to degrade the Christian profession, in our apprehension, by placing it in the due administration of the element of water.

Where, it is natural to ask, (though it is an inferior consideration) where is the *policy* of such a proceeding? What tendency has it to recommend and propagate the rite, about which such zeal is exerted, and such solicitude expressed. Will the insisting on it as a term of communion, give it any additional evidence, or invest it with supernumerary charms? Will it be better relished and received, for its approaching in the form of an exaction, than if it was intrusted to the force of argument and persuasion? Were it permitted to have recourse to intimidation, in the concerns of religion, where are our means and resources; where shall we look for that splendor of reputation, that command of emolument and power, which shall render a state of separation from Baptist societies, an intolerable grievance? Let us learn to think soberly of ourselves, and not endeavor to enforce the justest principles by means foreign to their nature; nor by substituting an impotent menace instead of argument, subject them to reprobation and ridicule.

Mr. Kinghorn gives it as his decided opinion that for a Pædobaptist statedly to attend the ministry of a Baptist, is a dereliction of principle. A great gulf ought, in his apprehension, to be fixed between the two denominations. But how is it possible, on this system, to indulge the hope of effecting a revolution in the public mind, when all the usual channels of communication are cut off, and the means of rational conviction laid under an interdict? If the hearers of both denominations, are bound to confine their at-

tendance to teachers, who will esteem it their duty to confirm them in their respective persuasions, the transition to an opposite system may be deemed almost a miracle. It were more natural to suppose, that in this instance, as well as others of greater moment, faith cometh by hearing, than that a crop should spring up, where no seed, or none but what is of an opposite kind, has been sown.

It is not a little curious to find it objected to the principles we are attempting to defend, that they are adapted to an imperfect, rather than a perfect state of things; when the utility of the entire system of Christianity results entirely from such an adaptation, and is nothing more than a sublime and mysterious condescension to human weakness and imperfection. What is the gospel, but a proposed alliance, in which infinite purity comes into contact with pollution, infinite justice with human demerits, and ineffable riches with hopeless penury? "Mixed communion," Mr. Kinghorn observes, "displays another genuine feature of error. It is only to be found (even on the concession of its warmest supporters) in that mingled state of things, which takes place between the first purity of the church and the ultimate display of gospel light. In the times of the Apostles it had no place; nor do we expect it will be found, when 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God.'" (Baptism a Term of Communion, p. 77.) Specious as this proposition may appear, it is in reality nothing but a truism. We both suppose infant baptism to be an innovation unknown in primitive times. But mixed communion means nothing else than the union of Baptists and Pædobaptists in the same religious society. To say therefore that no such practice was known in the times of the Apostles, is to say that the two denominations were not united, while there was only one; a profound discovery, the merit of which we will not dispute with this author. But when he proceeds to remark, that it will be equally unknown in the period usually styled the latter day glory, we must be permitted to remind him of a state incomparably superior, and to ask him whether he supposes his exclusive system will extend there; whether the Pædobaptist, dying in the possession of his supposed error, is disqualified to join "the spirits of just men made perfect; to mingle with the general assembly of the church of the first born." If this is not affirmed, let him reflect on the enormous absurdity of demanding a greater uniformity among the candidates for admission into the church militant, than is requisite for a union with the church triumphant, of claiming from the faithful, while encompassed with darkness and imperfection, more harmony and correctness of sentiment, than are necessary to qualify them to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of

God—of pretending to render a Christian society an enclosure more sacred, and more difficult of access, than the abode of the divine Majesty—and of investing every little Baptist teacher with the prerogative of repelling from his communion, a Howe, a Leighton, or a Brainerd, whom the Lord of glory will welcome to his presence. Transubstantiation presents nothing more revolting to the dictates of common sense.

The blessedness of a future world is ever represented in Scripture as the final end and scope of the Christian profession; the doctrines which it embraces, the duties which it enjoins, are represented as terminating in that, as its ultimate object. Religion itself, in its most general nature, is necessary only in consequence of the relation which the subjects of it bear to a future state; “patient continuance in well doing” is requisite, because it is the only safe and legitimate way of aspiring “to glory, honor, and immortality;” and the utmost that can be said to enforce any particular branch of practice, is, that it tends to prepare us for the eternal felicity. The church of Christ is unquestionably ordained merely as one of the instruments of qualifying its members for the possession of eternal life; but for this, it would have had no existence; and beyond this, we can conceive no end or purpose it was intended to accomplish. In a system of means, many things may be useful on account of their tendency to facilitate the accomplishment of their object, which are not absolutely necessary. They may accelerate its attainment, or attain it with greater certainty than it could be effected in their absence. But since the necessity of means arises solely from their relation to the end, *that*, whatever it be, without which the end may certainly be secured, can never be affirmed to be *necessary*, without an absolute contradiction. Is the organization of the church then a means of obtaining eternal life? Is it ordained solely with the view of preparing man for a future state of felicity, or in order to secure some temporary and secular object? If it be allowed that it is the former alone which it is designed to obtain, to assert that baptism is necessary to qualify for communion, when communion itself is only necessary as a means of preparing us for heaven, which it is allowed may with certainty be obtained without baptism, is a flat contradiction. It is to affirm that what is not essential to the attainment of a certain end, is yet a necessary part of the order of means, which is palpably absurd.

Let it be remembered that we are far from intending to insinuate that baptism is of little moment; or that a wanton inattention to this part of the will of Christ is consistent with a well founded assurance of salvation; our sole intention is to expose the inconsistency of supposing an involuntary mistake on this subject a suf-

ficient bar to communion, while it is acknowledged to be none to the participation of future blessedness.

Our opponents will probably remind us of the perfect unanimity which will prevail on this subject (in our apprehension) in the heavenly world. But when will this unanimity take place; will it be previous to an admission to the society of the blessed, or subsequent to that event? If it be subsequent, in receiving believers on the ground of their vital union with Christ, we follow the order of Heaven, which our opponents invert; while we indulge the hope, that, in consequence of coming into a closer contact with persons whose views on the subject of baptism are correct, they will be gradually induced to embrace them; firmly persuaded, that, whether this be the result or not, we incur no danger in following a celestial precedent. We are not surprised at our opponents making such high pretensions to purity in the discipline and economy of their churches; we only admire their modesty in not insisting on their loftiest and sublimest distinction, which consists in their societies being more select than heaven, and in its being more difficult to become a member of a Baptist church than to be saved.

The reader is requested to remember the extraordinary positions which Mr. Kinghorn has been compelled to advance, in defence of his restrictive system. He will recollect, we hope, that he has found it necessary to affirm that the most eminent saints, not excepting the illustrious army of martyrs, made no true profession of that religion for which they labored, and for which, with a divine prodigality they shed their blood; that though worthy of "walking with Christ in white," and of joining in the cry, "How long, O Lord, wilt thou avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth," they gave no scriptural evidence of their faith, and were consequently not entitled to its privileges, and that their claim to Christian communion was defeated, *not in consequence of any specific or peculiar connexion betwixt the two ordinances in question*, but solely on account of its being one of those privileges. He has found it necessary to assert that the terms of communion and of salvation are both immutable; that if baptism was ever necessary to salvation, it is so still; and, consequently that an involuntary mistake respecting a branch of Revelation, is equally criminal and dangerous with its wilful rejection. He has found it necessary to affirm that Pædobaptists are not received into the Christian dispensation, although he expresses his confident expectation of their being interested in its blessings, and justified by faith in its promises. These are but a scanty specimen of the wild and eccentric paradoxes into which this writer has been betrayed, while in quest of new discoveries, and resolved to project an *original*

defence of strict communion, he has quitted the sober path of his predecessors.

In some of the leading points of the argument, he has totally abandoned what Mr. Booth considered as forming his strong hold. Thus though he evinces an extreme reluctance to appear to coincide with the writer of these sheets in any thing, he in fact concedes all that he contended for, respecting the essential difference betwixt the baptism of John and that of Christ, and entertains no doubt that the twelve disciples at Ephesus were re-baptized. Thus the *palmarium argumentum* of his venerable predecessor is relinquished. Mr. Booth contended that though the Pædobaptists are *received* in the sense the Apostle intended in that expression, their right to the Lord's supper cannot be inferred; Mr. Kinghorn denies that they *are*; and thus the two champions are at variance *toto cælo*, on the interpretation of the passages chiefly concerned in this controversy. As these passages (Rom. 14: 1. 15: 7,) form a principal part of the gist of the debate, the intelligent reader is requested carefully to examine Mr. Kinghorn's mode of interpretation, and should it appear to be loaded with insuperable difficulties, it may with confidence be inferred, that the cause of strict communion, were it liable to no other objection, is untenable. He had too much acumen to reject Mr. Booth's solution of the difficulty, could it have been plausibly supported. Conscious it could not, he has attempted to substitute another, which is accompanied with still greater, though perhaps not quite such obvious inconveniences.

Dextrum Sylla latus, lævum implacata Charybdis
Obsidet.....

The writer is far from anticipating a speedy or sudden revolution in the sentiments of his brethren, as the consequence of his efforts in this controversy. He is contented to await the slow operation of time in extinguishing the prejudices which time alone has produced; conscious that bodies of men are peculiarly tenacious of their habits of thinking, and that it is wisely ordained that the conquest achieved by just and enlightened principles, should be firm and durable, in proportion to the tardiness of their progress. Another generation must probably rise up, before the rust of prejudice is sufficiently worn off, to leave room for the operation of reason, and the exercise of free inquiry on this subject. Our opponents, aware that a current has already set in, which threatens, at no very distant period, to sweep away their narrow and contracted system, are exerting every effort to stop it, but in vain,

Labitur et labetur, in omne volubilis ævum.

Mr. Kinghorn, while he acknowledges with extreme regret that the younger part of our ministers are generally unfavorably disposed to the cause he has attempted to defend, expresses his conviction that further reflection and inquiry will correct the aberrations of their youth, and recall them to the ancient path. But when was it ever known that an extension of knowledge produced a contraction of feeling, or that the effect of a more extended survey of the vast sphere of philosophical and religious speculation, was to magnify the importance of sectarian peculiarities. He anticipates this effect chiefly from the perusal of ecclesiastical history; a profound acquaintance with which, is to put them in possession of the marvellous secret, that mixed communion was unknown in the ages which succeeded the universal prevalence of infant baptism. The general agreement to consider that rite as an indispensable prerequisite to communion, during those ages, is to be received, it seems, as an oracle; while the baptism which they practised, is discarded as a nullity, the sole ground on which it was supposed to be necessary, deemed a most dangerous error, and innumerable other opinions and usages of equal notoriety and extent, consigned to the moles and to the bats. He must have a wonderful faculty of sanguine anticipation, who supposes that an unfettered mind will reject the authority of antiquity in every particular, except that which suits his own humor; and after considering whatever distinguishes the ecclesiastical economy of these ages, from that of dissenting societies, as a striking instance of human weakness, stop short in the career of reprobation just at the point he is pleased to prescribe. Such a procedure would be, (as Cicero observes on another occasion) not to argue, but to divine; and it would be just as reasonable, after making a collection of all the peculiar opinions and practices of Christian antiquity, to determine by lot which of them should be received, and which rejected.

Far from indulging the apprehension of a retrograde motion from enlarged and liberal to narrow and contracted principles, we have every reason to conclude, that the polar ice once broken, they will circulate to a much wider extent; and the revolution which has already commenced among those who are destined to guide the public mind, shortly produce a powerful effect on the people, who never fail, sooner or later, to follow the impulse of their public teachers. As it is this which gave rise to the present practice, so it is still, by a sort of incantation, by mustering the shades of the mighty dead, of a Booth and a Fuller especially, who are supposed to cast a dark and frowning aspect on the petulance of modern innovation, that it is chiefly supported; and with all due respect to the talents of Mr. Kinghorn, it may be confidently affirmed, that but for the authority of these worthies, his weapons would produce as little execution as the dart of Priam.

Deference to great names is a sentiment which it would be base to attempt to eradicate, and impossible were it attempted. But like other offsprings of the mind, it is at first rude and ill shapen. It makes no selection, no discrimination—it retains the impress of its original entire, just as it was made; it is a vague, undistinguishing admiration, which consecrates in a mass all the errors and deformities, along with the real excellencies of its object. Time only, the justest of all critics, gives it correctness and proportion, and converts what is at first merely the impression of a great upon an inferior mind, into an enlightened and impartial estimate of distinguished worth. The effect produced by coming into close contact with a commanding intellect, is of a mixed nature; it subdues and enslaves the very persons whom it enlightens, and almost invariably leaves a portion of its sediment, where it deposits its wealth. It must be placed at a certain distance before we derive from it all the pure, defecated good it is capable of imparting; and with all my admiration of the inestimable men already mentioned, and my conviction of the value of their services, I am persuaded that many years must elapse, before we entirely surmount the effects of a long continued dictatorship.

When the views of baptism, by which we are distinguished as a denomination, are once exonerated from the odium arising from the practice we have been opposing, and the prejudices which it has necessarily occasioned, have subsided, we may justly presume that the former will be examined with more impartiality; nor is it possible to assign a reason for their having made so limited a progress, besides the extreme disgust inspired by this most unchristian and unnatural alliance. It is too much to expect an enlightened Public will be eager to enroll themselves amongst the members of a sect, which displays much of the intolerance of Popery, without any portion of its splendor, and prescribes as the pledge of conversion, the renunciation of the whole Christian world. While the vestibule is planted with the most repulsive forms, while, *sedent in limine Diræ*, few will be intrepid enough to enter.

On Mr. Kinghorn's system which reprobates, as a dereliction of principle, the attendance of the members of Baptists and Pædobaptists on the ministry of each other, to calculate the ages which must in all probability elapse, ere our principles obtain a general prevalence, would form an amusing problem. The Hindoo chronology, which assigns to its fabulous dynasties millions and millions of years, might furnish a specimen of the scale on which such a calculation should proceed; and unless some such passion is expected to seize the members of other communities, as impelled the Queen of Sheba to come from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, the projected revolution must be pro-

nounced, in the absence of miracles, impossible. What can be the motive of the advocates of strict communion for studiously presenting every possible obstacle to the extensive diffusion of our principles? We might be almost tempted to conjecture that they were afraid of losing their title to the appellation of a little flock; or that they consider the Baptist denomination, as an order of nobility or of knighthood, whose dignity is impaired, in proportion as it is diffused. Be this as it may, the spirit of the age, distinguished by the superior expansion of its views, and the extensive co-operation of all sects and parties in the promotion of objects of public utility, the little success which has accompanied the narrow and restrictive system, the dictates of Scripture, and the movements of that divine charity which those dictates have impressed, all invite us to "consider our ways," to retrace our steps, and endeavor to draw our fellow Christians "by the cords of love, and the bands of a man." When we have learned to "make no difference," where the searcher of hearts makes none, when we shew an alacrity in embracing all who love Jesus Christ, as members of the same mystical body, when in conformity to the genius of Christianity, there is with us neither Jew nor Greek, neither Baptist nor Pædobaptist, but Christ is all in all, the reasons on which our peculiar practice is founded, will in all probability meet with a very different reception from what has hitherto attended them, accompanied as they have been with a system of impotent oppression, and unmerited contumely. But whether these expectations to their full extent are realized or not, we shall at least improve ourselves, wipe off the reproach of bigotry and intolerance, and rise in the esteem of a religious and enlightened public, by convincing them that our zeal for a ceremonial institution has not betrayed us into a forgetfulness that "love is the fulfilling of the law."

Thus have I endeavored to reply to the reasoning of my opponent on this subject; whether my answer will be deemed by a discerning public, conclusive, or otherwise, I trust they will be convinced that no attempt has been made to evade the force of his arguments, nor any thing passed over in silence to which he can be supposed to attach the least degree of importance. My anxiety to leave nothing untouched which bears any relation to the merits of the controversy, has extended this reply beyond my wishes and my expectation; conceiving it better to incur the charge of tediousness, than that of discussing a polemical point of high importance, in a slight and superficial manner. The mode of establishing a doctrine, in opposition to prevailing opinions and prejudices, is necessarily much more circuitous than the strict laws of reasoning require, in exhibiting its evidence to the under-

standing at a subsequent period. In the militant state of a doctrine, it is generally found necessary to incur frequent repetitions, to represent the same idea in a variety of lights, and to encounter a multitude of petty cavils and verbal sophisms, which, in its farther progress, sink into oblivion. When, in consequence of a series of discussions, a doctrine is firmly rooted in the public mind, the proof by which it is sustained may without impairing its force, be presented in a more compact and elegant form; and the time, I am persuaded, it is not very remote, when it will be matter of surprise that it should have been thought necessary to employ so many words in evincing a truth, so nearly self-evident as that which it is the object of the writer of these pages to establish. The flimsy sophistry by which it is attempted to be obscured, and the tedious process of reasoning opposed to these attempts, will be alike forgotten, and the very existence of the controversy remembered only among other melancholy monuments of human imperfection.

Some acceleration of that period, the author certainly anticipates from his present and his former productions; though he is fully aware that the chief obstacles which impede its approach are such as it is not in the power of argument alone to subdue. Reasoning supplies an effectual antidote to mere speculative error; but opposes a feeble barrier to inveterate prejudice, and to that contraction of feeling, which is the fruitful parent of innumerable mistakes and misconceptions in religion. There is no room, however for despondency. For as the dictates of Christian charity will always be found to coincide with the justest principles of reason, the first effect of inquiry will be to enlighten the mind, the second to expand and enlarge the heart; and when the Spirit is poured down from on high, he will effectually teach us that God is *Love*, and that we never please him more than when we embrace with open arms, without distinction of sect or party, all who bear his image.

A

SHORT

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS

FOR

CHRISTIAN IN OPPOSITION TO PARTY

COMMUNION.



PREFACE.

AFTER having discussed so largely, in some former publications, the question of strict communion, that is the prevailing practice in the Baptist denomination of confining their fellowship to members of their own community, it was not my intention to trouble the public with the subject any farther, not having the least ambition for the last word in controversy. But it has been suggested to me, that it would not be difficult to condense the substance of the argument within a smaller compass, so as to render it accessible to such as have neither the leisure nor the inclination to peruse a large performance. It has been my endeavor to cut off every thing superfluous, and, without doing injury to the merits of the cause, to present the reasoning which sustains it, in a concise and popular form; how far I have succeeded, must be left to the judgement of the reader.

I would only remark here, that all I have seen and heard concurs to convince me that the practice of strict communion, rests almost entirely on *authority*, and that were the influence of a few great names withdrawn, it would sink under its own weight. Among those of recent date, none has been more regarded than that of the late venerable Fuller; and as he left a manuscript on this subject to be published after his death, he is considered as having deposed his dying testimony in its favor. That he felt some predilection to a practice to which he had been so long accustomed, and whose propriety was very rarely questioned in his early days, is freely admitted; but that he all along felt some hesitation on the subject, and that his mind was not completely made up, I am induced to believe from several circumstances. First, from the fact of his proposing himself to commune at Cambridge, with the full knowledge of there being Pædobaptists present. Secondly, from a conversation which passed, many years ago, between him and the writer of these lines. In re-

ply to his observation that we act precisely on the same principle with our Pædobaptist brethren, since they also insist on baptism as an essential pre-requisite to communion, it was remarked, that this was a mere *argumentum ad hominem* ; it might serve to silence the clamors of those Pædobaptists, who, while they adhered to that principle, charged us with bigotry ; but that still it did not touch the merits of the question, since a previous inquiry occurs, whether any thing more is requisite to communion, on scriptural grounds, than a vital union with Christ ; his answer was, *When mixed communion is placed on that footing, I never yet ventured to attack it.* Hence I am compelled to consider his posthumous tract rather as a trial of what might be adduced on that side of the controversy, with a view to provoke further inquiry, than the result of deliberate and settled conviction. Be this as it may, great as his merits were, he was but a man, and as such liable to err, even on subjects of much greater importance. All I wish is, that without regard to human names or authorities, the matter in debate may be entirely determined by an unprejudiced appeal to reason and Scripture.

The prevalence of this disposition to bow to authority, and to receive opinions upon trust, is strikingly illustrated by the following anecdote. A highly respected friend of mine, on asking one of his deacons, a man of primitive piety and integrity, what objections he had to mixed communion, he replied with great simplicity, that he had two—in the first place, Mr. Fuller did not approve of it, and in the next, the Scripture declares, that he who pulls down a hedge, a serpent shall bite him. The good man very properly placed that reason first, which carried the greatest weight with it.

In short, there is a certain false refinement and subtlety in the argument for strict communion which would never occur to a plain man, who was left solely to the guidance of Scripture. In common with almost every other error, it derived its origin from the public teachers of religion, and with a change of sentiment in them, it will gradually disappear ; nor will it be long ere our churches will be surprised that they suffered themselves to be betrayed, by specious but hollow sophistry, into a practice so repulsive and so impolitic.

Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas.

October 7th, 1826.

SHORT STATEMENT,

&c.

It is admitted, by all denominations of Christians, with the exception of one, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is of perpetual obligation, and that it was designed by its Founder for one of the principal indications and expressions of that fraternal affection which ought to distinguish his followers. Though the communion of saints is of larger extent, comprehending all those sentiments and actions, by which Christians are especially united, the joint participation of this rite is universally acknowledged to constitute an important branch of that communion. So important a part has it been considered, that it has usurped the name of the whole ; and when any dispute arises respecting the terms of communion, it is generally understood to relate to the terms of admission to the Lord's table.

Whether all real Christians are entitled to share in this privilege, whether it forms a part of that spiritual provision which belongs to the whole family of the faithful, or whether it is the exclusive patrimony of a sect, who, (on the ground of their supposed imperfection,) are authorized to repel the rest, is the question which it is my purpose, in the following pages, briefly and calmly to discuss. The first conclusion to which we should naturally arrive, would probably favor the most liberal system ; we should be ready to suppose that he who is accepted of Christ ought also to be accepted of his brethren, and that he whose right to the thing signified was not questioned, possessed an undoubted right to the outward sign. There are some truths which are so self-evident, that a formal attempt to prove them has the appearance of trifling, where the premises and the conclusion so nearly coincide, that it is not easy to point out the intermediate links that at once separate and connect them. Whether the assertion that all sincere

Christians are entitled to a place at the Lord's table is of that description, will more clearly appear as we advance; but I must be permitted to say, that a feeling of the kind just mentioned, has occasioned the greatest difficulty I have experienced in this discussion.

It is well known that a diversity of sentiment has long subsisted in this country, in relation to the proper subjects of baptism, together with the mode of administering that rite. While the great body of the Christian world administer baptism to infants, and adopt the practice of sprinkling or pouring the sacramental water, there are some who contend that baptism should be confined to those who are capable of understanding the articles of the Christian religion, or in other words, to adults, and that the proper mode is the immersion of the whole body. They who maintain the last of these opinions, were formerly designated by the appellation of *Anabaptists*, but as that term implied that they assumed a right of *repeating* baptism, when in reality their only reason for baptizing such as had been sprinkled in their infancy, was that they looked upon the baptism of infants as a mere human invention, the candor of modern times has changed the invidious appellation of *Anabaptist*, to the more simple one of *Baptist*.

It is not my intention to attempt the defence of that class of Christians, though their views are entirely in accordance with my own; one consequence, however, necessarily results. We are compelled, by virtue of them, to look upon the great mass of our fellow Christians as *unbaptized*. On no other ground can we maintain our principles, or justify our conduct. Hence it has been inferred, too hastily in my opinion, that we are bound to abstain from their communion, whatever judgement we may form of their sincerity and piety. Baptism, it is alleged, is under all possible circumstances an indispensable term of communion, and however highly we may esteem many of our Pædobaptist brethren, yet as we cannot but deem them *unbaptized*, we must of necessity consider them as disqualified for an approach to the Lord's table. It is evident that this reasoning rests entirely on the assumption, that baptism is invariably a necessary condition of communion—an opinion which it is not surprising the Baptists should have embraced, since it has long passed current in the Christian world, and been received by nearly all denominations of Christians. The truth is, it has never till of late become a practical question, nor could it while all parties acknowledged each other's baptism. It was only when a religious denomination arose, whose principles compelled them to deny the validity of any other baptism besides that which they themselves practised, that the question respecting the relation which that ordinance bears to the Lord's supper, could have any influ-

ence on practice. But a doctrine which can have no possible influence on practice, is received with little or no examination; and to this must be imputed the facility with which it has been so generally admitted that baptism must necessarily and invariably precede an admission to the Lord's table. The wide circulation, however, of this doctrine, ought undoubtedly to have the effect of softening the severity of censure on that conduct (however singular it may appear,) which is its necessary result; such is that of the great majority of the Baptists, in confining their communion to those whom they deem baptized; wherein they act precisely on the same principle with all other Christians, who assume it for granted that baptism is an essential preliminary to the reception of the sacrament. The point on which they differ, is the nature of that institution; which we place in immersion, and of which we suppose rational and accountable agents the only fit subjects; this opinion, combined with the other generally received one, that none are entitled to receive the eucharist but such as have been baptized, leads inevitably to the practice which seems so singular, and gives so much offence—the restricting of communion to our own denomination. Let it be admitted that baptism is under all circumstances a necessary condition of church fellowship, and it is impossible for the Baptists to act otherwise. That their practice in this particular is harsh and illiberal, is freely admitted; but it is the infallible consequence of the opinion generally entertained respecting communion, conjoined with their peculiar views of the baptismal rite. The recollection of this may suffice to rebut the ridicule, and silence the clamor of those, who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding, which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of baptism, their own principles would compel them to adopt. They both concur in a common principle, from which the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result.

Considered as an *argumentum ad hominem*, or an appeal to the avowed principles of our opponents, this reasoning may be sufficient to shield us from that severity of reproach to which we are often exposed, nor ought we to be censured for acting upon a system which is sanctioned by our accusers. Still it leaves the real merits of the question untouched; for the inquiry remains open, whether baptism is an indispensable pre-requisite to communion; in other words, whether they stand in such a relation to each other, that the involuntary neglect of the first, incurs a forfeiture of the title to the last.

The chief, I might say the only argument for the restricted plan of communion, is derived from the example of the Apostles, and the practice of the primitive church. It is alleged, with some ap-

pearance of plausibility that the first duty enjoined on the primitive converts to Christianity was to be baptized, that no repeal of the law has taken place since, that the Apostles uniformly baptized their converts before they admitted them to the sacrament, and that during the first and purest ages, the church knew of no members who had not submitted to that rite; and that consequently, in declining a union with those, who, however estimable in other respects, we are obliged to consider as *unbaptized*, we are following the highest precedents, and treading in the hallowed steps of the inspired teachers of religion. Such, in a few words, is the sum and substance of their reasoning who are the advocates of strict communion; and as it approaches with a lofty and imposing air, and has prevailed with thousands, to embrace what appears to me a most serious error, we must bespeak the reader's patience, while we endeavor to sift it to the bottom, in order to expose its fallacy.

Precedent derived from the practice of inspired men is entitled to be regarded as *law*, in exact proportion as the spirit of it is copied, and the *principle* on which it proceeds is acted upon. If neglectful of these, we attend to the letter only, we shall be betrayed into the most serious mistakes, since there are a thousand actions recorded of the Apostles in the government of the church, which it would be the height of folly and presumption to imitate. Above all things, it is necessary, before we proceed to found a rule of action on precedent, carefully to investigate the circumstances under which it occurred, and the reasons on which it was founded. The Apostles, it is acknowledged, admitted none to the Lord's supper, but such as were previously baptized; but under what circumstances did they maintain this course? It was at a time, when a mistake respecting the will of the Supreme Legislator on the subject of baptism was impossible; it was while a diversity of opinion relating to it could not possibly subsist, because inspired men were at hand, ready to remove every doubt, and satisfy the mind of every honest inquirer. It was under circumstances, that must have convicted him who declined compliance with that ordinance of willful prevarication, and stubborn resistance to the delegates and representatives of Christ, who commissioned them to promulgate his laws, with an express assurance that "whoever rejected them, rejected him, and whoever received them, received him," and that to refuse to obey their word, exposed the offender to a severer doom, than was allotted to Sodom and Gomorrah. (Matt. 10: 14, 15.) Their instructions were too plain to be mistaken, their authority too sacred to be contemned by a professor of Christianity, without being guilty of daring impiety. In such a state of things, it may be asked, how could they have acted differently from

what they did? To have received into the church men who disputed their inspiration and despised their injunctions, would have been to betray their trust, and to renounce their pretensions as the living depositaries of the mind of Christ; to have admitted those who, believing their inspiration, yet refused a compliance with their orders, would have let into the church the most unheard of licentiousness, and polluted it, by incorporating with its members, the worst of men. Neither of these could be thought of, and no other alternative remained but to insist as a test of sincerity on a punctual compliance, with what was known and acknowledged as the apostolic doctrine. "We are of God," says St. John, "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us; hereby we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." (1 John 4: 6.) In short, the Apostles refused to impart the external privileges of the church to such as impugned their authority, or contemned their injunctions, which, whoever persisted in the neglect of baptism at that time, and in those circumstances, must necessarily have done.

But in declining the communion of modern Pædobaptists, however eminent their piety, there is really nothing analogous to their method of proceeding. The resemblance fails in its most essential features. In repelling an unbaptized person from their communion, supposing such a one to have presented himself, they would have rejected the violator of a known precept; he whom we refuse, is at most chargeable only with mistaking it. The former must either have neglected an acknowledged precept, and thus evinced a mind destitute of principle, or he must have set the authority of the Apostles at defiance, and thus have classed with parties of the worst description. Our Pædobaptist brethren are exposed to neither of these charges; convince them that it is their duty to be baptized, in the method which we approve, and they stand ready, many of them at least we cannot doubt, stand ready to perform it; convince them that it is a necessary inference from the correct interpretation of the apostolic commission, and they will without hesitation bow to that authority.

The most rigid Baptist will probably admit that, however clear and irresistible the evidence of his sentiments may appear to himself, there are those whom it fails to convince, and some of them at least illustrious examples of piety; men who would tremble at the thought of deliberately violating the least of the commands of Christ or of his Apostles; men whose character and principles, consequently, form a striking contrast with those of the persons, whom it is allowed the Apostles would have repelled. But to separate ourselves from the best of men, because the Apostles would have withdrawn from the worst, to confound the broadest

moral distinctions, by awarding the same treatment to involuntary and conscientious error, which they were prepared to inflict on stubborn and wilful disobedience, is certainly a very curious method of following apostolic precedent. "The letter killeth," says St. Paul, "the spirit maketh alive." Whether the contrariety of these was ever more strongly marked, than by such a method of imitating the Apostles, let the reader judge.

For the clearer illustration of this point, let us suppose a case. A person proposes himself as a candidate for admission to a Baptist church. The minister inquires into his views of the ordinance of baptism, and respectfully asks whether he is convinced of the divine authority of the rite which was administered to him in his infancy. He confesses he is not, that on mature deliberation and inquiry he considers it as a human invention. On his thus avowing his conviction, he is urged to confess Christ before men, by a prompt compliance with what he is satisfied is a part of his revealed will; he hesitates, he refuses, alleging that it is not essential to salvation, that it is a mere external rite, and that some of the holiest men have died in the neglect of it. Here is a parallel case to that of a person who should have declined the ordinance of baptism in primitive times; and in entire consistence with the principles which we are maintaining, we have no hesitation in affirming, that the individual in question is disqualified for Christian communion. To receive him under such circumstances, would be sanctioning the want of principle, and pouring contempt on the Christian precepts. Yet the conduct we have now supposed would be less criminal than to have shrunk from baptism in the apostolic age, because, the evidence by which our views are supported, though sufficient for every practical purpose, is decidedly inferior to that which accompanied their first promulgation; the utmost that we can pretend, is a very high probability; the primitive converts possessed an absolute certainty. Now, since we are prepared to visit an inferior degree of delinquency to that which would have insured the rejection of a candidate by the Apostles, with the same severity, how preposterous is it to charge us with departing from apostolical precedent! In the same circumstances, or in circumstances nearly the same, we are ready instantly to act the same part; let the circumstances be essentially varied, and our proceeding is proportionably different. The Apostles refused the communion of such, and such only, as were insincere, "who held the truth in unrighteousness," avowing their conviction of one system, and acting upon another; and wherever similar indications display themselves, we do precisely the same. They admitted the weak and erroneous, providing their errors were not of a nature subversive of Christianity; and so do we.

They tolerated men whose sentiments differed from their own, providing they did not rear the standard of revolt, by a deliberate resistance to the only infallible authority ; and such precisely is the course we pursue. We bear with those who mistake the dictates of inspiration, in points which are not essential ; but with none who wilfully contradict, or neglect them. In the government of the church, as far as our means of information reach, the immediate ambassadors of Christ appear to have set us an example of much gentleness and mildness, to have exercised a tender consideration of human imperfection, and to have reserved all their severity for a contumacious rejection of their guidance, and disdain of their instructions. And wherever these features appear, we humbly tread in their steps ; being as little disposed as they, to countenance or receive those who impugn their inspiration, or censure their decisions.

They were certainly strangers to that scheme of ecclesiastical polity, which proposes to divide the mystical body of Christ into two parts, one consisting of such as enjoy communion with him, the other of such as are entitled to commune with each other. In no part of their writings, is the faintest vestige to be discerned of that state of things, of which our opponents are enamored, where a vast majority of sincere Christians are deemed disqualified for Christian fellowship, and while their pretensions to acceptance with God, and a title to eternal life, are undisputed, are yet to be kept in a state of seclusion from the visible church. Had they in any part of their Epistles appeared to broach such a doctrine ; had they lavished high encomiums on the faith and piety of those with whom they refused to associate at the Lord's supper, our astonishment at sentiments so singular and so eccentric, would have been such, that scarce any conceivable uniformity of manuscripts or of versions, could have accredited the passages that contained them. That the primitive church was composed of professed believers, and none debarred from its privileges, but such whose faith was essentially erroneous, or their character doubtful, is a matter of fact which appears on the very surface of the inspired records, and was probably never called in question, in any age or country, until an opposite principle was avowed and acted by the modern Baptists, who appropriate its title and its immunities to themselves, while with strange inconsistency they proclaim their conviction, that the persons whom they exclude are indisputably in possession of its interior and spiritual privileges. For this portentous separation of the internal from the outward and visible privileges of Christianity ; for confining the latter to a mere handful of such as have "obtained like precious faith with themselves," in vain will they seek for support in the example of

the Apostles. They repeatedly and earnestly warn us against resting in external advantages, and of the danger of substituting the outward sign for the inward and spiritual grace ; but never give the slightest intimation of the possibility of possessing the first, without being entitled to the last. The assertion of such an opinion, and the practice founded upon it, the reader will at once perceive, is a departure from the precedent and example of the earliest age, which it would be difficult to parallel.

In opposition, however, to all that has been urged to show the obvious disparity between the two cases, our opponents still reiterate the cry, The Apostles did not tolerate the omission of baptism, and therefore we are not justified in tolerating it ! But is the omission of a duty to be judged of in relation to its moral quality, without any regard to circumstances, without any consideration whether it be voluntary or involuntary, whether it proceed from perversity of will, or error of judgement, from an erroneous interpretation of our Lord's precepts, or a contempt of his injunctions ; and supposing our Pædobaptist brethren to be sincere and conscientious, is there any resemblance between them and those whom the Apostles, it is allowed, would have repelled, except in the mere circumstance of their being both unbaptized, the one because they despised the apostolic injunctions, the other because they mistake them ? The former, (supposing them to have existed at all,) must have been men over whose conscience the word of God had no power ; the latter tremble at his word, and are restrained from following our example by deference to his will. If such opposite characters are the natural objects of a contrary state of feeling, they must be equally so of a contrary treatment ; nor can any thing be more preposterous than to confound them together, under the pretence of a regard to apostolic precedent. Our treatment of mankind should undoubtedly be the expression of our feelings, and regulated by our estimate of their character. Strict communion prescribes the contrary ; it sets the conduct and the feelings at variance, and erects into a duty the mortification of our best and holiest propensities.

The discipline of the church, as prescribed by Christ and his Apostles, is founded on principles applicable to every age, and to every combination of events to which it is liable, in a world replete with change, where new forms of error, new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth, are destined to follow in rapid and unceasing succession. Among these we are compelled to enumerate the prevailing notions of the Christian world on the subject of baptism—an error, which it is obvious, could have no subsistence during the age of the Apostles. Here then arises a new case, and it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, how it is

to be treated. It plainly cannot be decided by a reference to apostolic precedent, because nothing of this kind then existed, or could exist. The precept which enjoined the baptism of new converts might be resisted, but it could not be mistaken, and therefore no inference can be drawn from the treatment, which it is admitted the Apostles would have assigned to wilful disobedience, that is applicable to the case of involuntary error. The only method of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, is to consider how they conducted themselves towards sincere, though erring Christians, together with the temper they recommend us to cultivate towards such as labor under mistakes and misconceptions, not inconsistent with piety. Without expecting a specific direction for the regulation of our conduct in this identical particular, which would be to suppose the error in question *not* new, it is quite sufficient if the general principle of toleration which the New Testament enjoins, is found to comprehend the present instance.

If action be founded on conviction, as it undoubtedly is in all well regulated minds, we are as much obliged to mould our sentiments into an agreement with those of the Apostles, as our conduct ; inspired precedents of thought are as authoritative as those of action. The advocates of strict communion are clamorous in their demand that, in relation to church fellowship, we should treat all Pædobaptists exactly in the same manner as the Apostles would have treated unbaptized persons in their day. But must we not, for the same reason, *think* the same of them ? This, however, they disclaim as much as we do ; they are perfectly sensible, nor have they the hardihood to deny, that the difference is immense, between a conscientious mistake of the mind of Christ, on a particular subject, and a deliberate contempt or neglect of it. Who can doubt that the Apostles would be the first to feel this distinction ; and as they would, undoubtedly, in common with all conscientious persons, regulate their conduct by their sentiments, that, could they be personally consulted, they would recommend a correspondent difference of treatment ? To sum up the argument in a few words. Nothing can be more hollow and fallacious than the pretension of our opponents, that they are guided by inspired precedent, for we have no precedent in the case ; in other words, we have no example of the manner in which they conducted themselves towards such as fell into an error on the subject of baptism ; the Scriptures make no allusion to such an error, which attaches at present to many most tenacious of its authority, humbly submissive to its dictates, and deeply imbued with its spirit ; to men, in a word, of the most opposite character to those who may be supposed, in consequence of setting light by the authority of inspired teachers, to have neglected baptism in the first ages.

Thus much may suffice for apostolic precedent. There is still one more view of the subject, to which the attention of the reader is requested for a moment. It remains to be considered whether there is any *peculiar connexion* between the two ordinances, of baptism and the Lord's supper, either in the nature of things, or by divine appointment, so as to render it improper to administer the one without the other. That there is no *natural* connexion is obvious. They were instituted at different times, and for different purposes; baptism is a mode of professing our faith in the blessed Trinity, the Lord's supper as a commemoration of the dying love of the Redeemer: the former is the act of an individual, the latter of a society. The words which contain our warrant for the celebration of the eucharist convey no allusion to baptism whatever: those which prescribe baptism carry no anticipative reference to the eucharist. And as it is demonstrable that John's baptism was a separate institution from that which was enacted after our Lord's resurrection, the Lord's supper is evidently *anterior* to baptism, and the original communicants consisted entirely of such as had not received that ordinance. To all appearance, the rites in question rest on independent grounds. But perhaps there is a *special* connexion between the two, arising from *divine appointment*. If this be the case, it will be easy to point it out. Rarely, if ever, are they mentioned together, and on no occasion is it asserted, or insinuated, that the validity of the sacrament depends on the previous observation of the baptismal ceremony. That there was such a connexion between circumcision and the passover, we learn from the explicit declaration of Moses, who asserts that "no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." Let a similar prohibition be produced in the present instance, and the controversy is at an end.

The late excellent Mr. Fuller, in a posthumous pamphlet on this subject, labored hard to prove an *instituted* connexion between the two ordinances, but his conclusion from the premises is so feeble and precarious, that we strongly suspect his own mind was not fully made up on the subject. His reasoning is certainly very little adapted to satisfy an impartial inquirer. The whole performance appears more like an experiment of what might be advanced in favor of a prevailing hypothesis, than the result of deep and deliberate conviction.

On this point our opponents are at variance with each other; Mr. Kinghorn roundly asserts that baptism has no more connexion with the Lord's supper than with *every other part* of Christianity. Thus what Mr. Fuller attempts to demonstrate as the main pillar of his cause, Mr. Kinghorn abandons without scruple. What a fortunate position is that to which men may arrive, who proceed

in the most opposite directions—a sort of mental antipodes which you will reach with equal certainty, whether you advance by the east or by the west. From the title of Mr. Kinghorn's book, which is, *Baptism a Term of Communion*, we should be led to expect that it was his principal object to trace some *specific* relation which these rites bear to each other. No such thing; he denies there is any such relation; baptism, he declares, is no otherwise connected with the Lord's supper than it is with every other part of Christianity. But on his hypothesis, it is essential to the eucharist, and consequently it is essential to every part of Christianity; so that the omission of it, from whatever cause, is such an error in the first concoction, that it vitiates every branch of religion, disqualifies for all its duties, and incurs the forfeiture of all its privileges. This is the statement of a man who makes loud professions of attachment to our Pædobaptist brethren; nor can he escape from this strange dilemma but by retracing his steps, and taking his stand with Mr. Fuller on a supposed *instituted* relation between the two ordinances. Meanwhile, it is instructive to observe, in what inextricable labyrinths the acutest minds are entangled, which desert the high road of common sense, in pursuit of fanciful theories.

Having cleared the way, by showing that Scripture precedent, properly interpreted, affords no countenance or support to strict communion, the remaining task is very easy. For nothing can be more evident, than that the whole genius of Christianity is favorable to the most cordial and affectionate treatment of our fellow Christians. To love them fervently, to bear with their imperfections, and cast the mantle of forgiveness over their infirmities, is to fulfil the law of Christ. A schism in his mystical body is deprecated as the greatest evil, and whatever tends to promote it is subjected to the severest reprobation. "Now I beseech you, by the name of the Lord Jesus," is the language of St. Paul, "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it has been declared unto me, by them who are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" In applying these and innumerable other passages of similar import to the point under discussion, two questions occur. First, Are our Pædobaptist brethren a part of the mystical body of Christ? or, in other words, Do they form a portion of that church, which he has purchased by his precious blood? If they are not, they are not in a state of salvation, since

none can be in that state who are not vitally united to Christ. The Bible acknowledges but two classes into which the whole human race is distributed, the church and the world ; there is no intermediate condition ; whoever is not of the first, necessarily belongs to the last. But the advocates for strict communion are loud in their professions of esteem for pious Pædobaptists, nor is there any thing they would more resent, than a doubt of their sincerity in that particular. The persons whom they exclude from their communion are then, by their own confession, a part of the flock of Christ, a portion of his mystical body, and of that church which he has bought with his blood.

The next question is, whether a formal separation from them on the account of their imputed error amounts to what the Scripture styles *schism* ! Supposing one part of the church at Corinth had formally severed themselves from the other, and established a separate communion, allowing those whom they had forsaken, at the same time, the title of sincere Christians, would this have been considered as a *schism* ? That it would, is demonstrable from the language of St. Paul, who accuses the Corinthians of having *schisms** among them, though they never dreamed of forming a distinct and separate communion. If they are charged with schism, on account of that spirit of contention, and that alienation of their affections from each other, which merely tended to an open rupture, how much more would they have incurred that censure, had they actually proceeded to that extremity. *Schism*, in its primitive and literal sense, signifies the breaking of a substance into two or more parts, and when figuratively applied to a body of men, it denotes the division of it into parties ; and though it may be applied to such a state of contention as consists with the preservation of external union, it is most eminently applicable to a society whose bond of union is dissolved, and where one part rejects the other from its fellowship. If there is any meaning in terms, this is schism in its highest sense. The great Apostle of the Gentiles illustrates the union of the faithful, by that which subsists between the members of the natural body. “ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” He shows, in a beautiful and impressive manner, that the several members have each his distinct function, and are pervaded by a common sympathy—with the express design “ that there be no schism in the body.” But when one part of the Christian church avowedly excludes another from their communion, when they refuse to unite in the most distinguishing branch of social worship, and hold themselves in a state of seclusion, they virtually say to the party

* The original word rendered divisions, is *οἰσμοὶ*, *schisms*.

thus repelled, "We have no need of thee;" they cut themselves off from the body, and are guilty of a schism so open and conspicuous, that none can fail to perceive it. How is it possible for them to evade the conclusion to which this reasoning conducts us, unless they are prepared to deny the claim of the Pædobaptists to be regarded as the members of Christ, or place them in some intermediate station betwixt the world and the church. But the language of the New Testament, which uniformly identifies the objects of the divine favor with the members of Christ's church, is directly opposed to such a fiction. "He loved the *church*, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

It deserves the serious consideration of our opponents, that they are *contending* for that schism in the body of Christ, against which he so fervently prayed, so anxiously guarded, and which his Apostles represent as its greatest calamity and reproach. "The glory," said our Lord, "which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Here it cannot be doubted that our Pædobaptist brethren are comprehended in this prayer, because our Lord declares it was preferred, not merely for the disciples then existing, but for those also who should hereafter believe through their word, adding, "that they *all* may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." In these words, we find him praying for a visible union among his disciples, such a union as the world might easily perceive, and this he intreats in behalf of them all, that they *all* may be one. The advocates of strict communion plead for a visible *disunion*; nor will it avail them to reply, that they cultivate a fraternal affection towards Christians of other denominations, while they insist on such a visible separation, as must make it apparent to the world that they are *not* one. Internal sentiments of esteem are cognizable only by the Searcher of hearts; external indications are all that the world has to judge by; and so far are they from exhibiting these, that they value themselves in maintaining such a position towards their fellow Christians as confounds them, in a very important point, with infidels and heathens. If a rent and division in the body is pregnant with so much scandal and offence as the Scriptures represent it; if the spirit of love and concord is the distinguishing badge of the Christian profession; it is surprising it has never occurred to them,

that by insisting on such a separation, as was unheard of in the primitive times, every approach to which is denounced in Scripture as a most serious evil; they are acting in direct opposition to the genius of the gospel, and the solemn injunctions of its inspired teachers. What degree of criminality may attach to such a procedure it is not for us to determine; but we have no hesitation in affirming, that it is most abhorrent from the intention of the Head of the church, and miserably compensated by that more correct view of the ordinance of baptism, which is alleged in its support. "Charity is the end of the commandment," "the fulfilling of the law;" and since the religion of Christ is not ceremonial, but vital, and consists less in correct opinions and ritual observances, than in these graces of the Spirit, which are the "hidden man of the heart," it deserves serious consideration, whether so palpable a violation of the unity of the church is not more offensive in the eyes of Him who "tries the hearts and the reins," than an involuntary mistake of a ceremonial precept.

Here we must be allowed once more to recur to the vain boast of a scrupulous adherence to the example of the Apostles, (the futility of which has, I trust, been sufficiently demonstrated,) and request our opponents to reflect for a moment on their essential deviation in this particular. Say, did the Apostles refuse the communion of good men? Did they set the example of dividing them into two classes, a qualified and a disqualified class; and while they acknowledged the latter were objects of the divine favor, equally with themselves, enjoin on their converts the duty of disowning them at the Lord's table? Are any traces to be discovered in the New Testament, of a society of *Purists*, who, under the pretence of superior illumination on one subject, kept themselves aloof from the Christian world, excluding from their communion myriads of those whom they believed to be heirs of salvation? Did they narrow their views of church fellowship, as Mr. Kinghorn avows is the case of the modern Baptists, to the purpose of holding up to view *one neglected truth*? On this plan, as many separate communions will be witnessed, as there are varieties of religious taste and predilection, while each fancies it perceives some neglected duty, or some truth not rendered sufficiently prominent, till almost every inquiry will give birth to some solitary and anti-social sect. The direct tendency of such a principle is not merely to annihilate the unity of the church, but to contract the heart, to narrow the understanding, and in the room of "holding forth the word of life," to invest every petty speculation and minute opinion with the dignity of a fundamental truth.

The revival or propagation of some one particular truth, being

the avowed object of their union, the members of such a society will almost inevitably attach to it an undue importance ; and, as their attention will be chiefly directed towards that in which they differ from others, and in which they are conceived to excel, it will be a miracle if they escape a censorious, conceited, disputatious spirit. While their constitution is founded, not so much on a separation from the world, as from the church, they will be almost irresistibly tempted to transfer to the latter a large portion of the associations and feelings, of which the former is the proper object.

How refreshing is it to turn from these rigid and repulsive principles, to the contemplation of the generous maxims of the New Testament ! “Him that is weak in the faith,” says St. Paul, “receive ye, not to doubtful disputations ;” (Rom. 14: 1 ;) and after illustrating his meaning, by adducing examples of various diversities of sentiment amongst his converts, he proceeds to inculcate the most perfect mutual toleration. It is observable, that the differences of opinion which he specifies related to the obligation of certain positive institutes, to which, though abrogated by the new dispensation, part of the church adhered, while its more enlightened members understood and embraced the liberty with which Christ had made them free. “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” A moment’s attention to the connexion will convince the reader, that the term *weak*, in both these passages, denotes persons whose conceptions are erroneous ; for the inspired writer is not adverting to the different degrees of conviction with which the same truths are embraced, but to a palpable difference of judgement. Thus far the case here decided, is precisely similar to that under present discussion : our difference from the Pædobaptists turns on the nature and obligation of a positive institute. The error, of which St. Paul enjoined the toleration, consisted in adhering to certain ceremonies which had been abrogated ; the error, with which we are concerned, consists in mistaking a ceremony which is still in force. Neither of the ancient, nor of the modern error is it pretended that they are fundamental, or that they endanger the salvation of those who hold them. Thus far they stand on the same footing, and the presumption is that they ought to be treated in the same manner. Before we come to this conclusion, however, it behooves us to examine the *principle* on which the Apostle enjoins toleration, and if this is applicable in its full extent to the case of our Pædobaptist brethren, no room is left for doubt. The *principle* plainly is, that the error in question was not of such magnitude as to preclude him who maintained it from the favor of God. “Let not him who eateth, despise him who eateth not ; and let

not him who eateth not, judge him who eateth; *for God hath received him.* Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; *for God is able to make him stand.*" In the same manner, in the next chapter of the same Epistle, after reminding the strong that it is their duty to bear the infirmities of the weak, he adds, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also hath received us to the glory of the Father." If such is the reason assigned for mutual toleration, and it is acknowledged to be a sufficient one, which none can deny without impeaching the inspiration of the writer, it is as conclusive respecting the obligation of tolerating every error which is consistent with a state of salvation, as if that error had been mentioned by name; and as few, if any, are to be met with who doubt the piety of many Pædobaptists, it not only justifies their reception, but renders it an indispensable duty. Nothing can be more futile than the attempt to turn aside the edge of this reasoning, by remarking that there is no mention of baptism, and that this is not the subject of which St. Paul is treating, as though the Bible contained no general principles, no maxims of universal application, but that precise directions must be found for every possible emergence that in the lapse of ages may occur. Were it constructed upon this plan, the Bible must be infinitely more voluminous than the statutes at large. It is composed on one widely different: it gives general rules of action, broad principles, leaving them to be applied under the guidance of sound discretion; and wherever it has decided a doubtful question, accompanied with an express statement of the principle on which the decision is founded, such explanation has all the force of an apostolic canon, by which we are bound to regulate our conduct in all the variety of cases to which it applies. Hence we have only one alternative, either to deny that those who differ from us on the subject of baptism are accepted of God, or to receive them into fellowship, on exactly the *same ground*, and on the *same principle*, that Paul enjoined the toleration of sincere Christians.

Before I dismiss this part of the subject, on which the patience of the reader has been severely tasked, I must beg leave to notice a striking inconsistency in the advocates of strict communion. Nothing is more certain than that the communion of saints, is by no means confined to one particular occasion, or limited to one transaction, such as that of assembling around the Lord's table; it extends to all the modes by which believers recognize each other, as the members of a common head. Every expression of fraternal regard, every participation in the enjoyments of social worship, every instance of the unity of the Spirit exerted in prayer and supplication, or in acts of Christian sympathy and friendship,

as truly belongs to the communion of saints, as the celebration of the eucharist. In truth, if we are strangers to communion with our fellow Christians on other occasions, it is impossible for us to enjoy it there; for the mind is not a piece of mechanism which can be set agoing at pleasure, whose movements are obedient to the call of time and place. Nothing short of an habitual sympathy of spirit, springing from the cultivation of benevolent feeling, and the interchange of kind offices, will secure that reciprocal delight, that social pleasure, which is the soul of Christian communion. Its richest fruits are frequently reserved for private conference, like that in which the two disciples were engaged, in their way to Emmaus, when their hearts burned within them, while the Lord opened to them the Scriptures. When they take sweet counsel together, as they go to the house of God in company, when they bear each other's burdens, weep with those that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice; say, have Christians no mutual fellowship? Is it not surprising that, losing sight of such obvious facts, our opponents always reason on the subject of communion as though it related merely to the sacrament? In every other particular they act just as we do.

However our opponents may deviate from Scripture, let them at least be consistent with themselves, and either follow out their own principles to their just consequence, by withholding from the members of other denominations every token of fraternal regard, or freely admit them to the Lord's table. As the case stands at present, their mode of proceeding is utterly untenable. In a variety of instances, they indulge themselves in those acts of communion with Pædobaptists which are peculiar to Christians; they frequently make them their mouth in addressing the Deity; they exchange pulpits; and even engage their assistance in exercises intended as a preparation for the eucharist; and after lighting the flame of devotion at their torch, they most preposterously turn round to inform them, that they are not worthy to participate. It would be difficult to convince a stranger to our practice, that it were possible to be guilty of such an absurdity. Is the observance of an external rite, let me ask, a more solemn part of religion than addressing the Majesty of heaven and of earth? And shall we depute *him* to present our prayers at his footstool, who would defile a sacrament by his presence? Suppose them to relax from their rigor, and to admit pious Pædobaptists to their fellowship, to what would it amount? To nothing more than a public acknowledgement of their union to Christ, and their interest in his benefits; and as they fully acknowledge both, why scruple to do it at the table of their common Lord? Why select an ordinance designed for the commemoration of the dying love of the Redeem-

er as the signal for displaying the banners of party ; and by reviving the remembrance of differences, elsewhere consigned to oblivion, give the utmost publicity to dissensions, which are the reproach of the church, and the triumph of the world.

The only color invented to disguise this glaring inconsistency, is so pure a logomachy, that it is difficult to speak of it with becoming gravity. They remind us, forsooth, that the expressions of Christian affection in praying and preaching for each other are not church acts, as though there were some magic in the word church that could change the nature of truth, or the obligations of duty. If it is our duty to recognize those as fellow Christians who are really such, what is there in the idea of a church that should render it improper there? If the church is "the pillar and ground of truth," it is the proper place for the fullest disclosure of its secrets ; and if Christians are under an obligation to love each other with a pure heart, fervently, its organization can never have been designed to contract the heart, by confining the movements and expressions of charity within narrower limits. The duty of churches originates in that of the individuals of which they consist, so that when we have ascertained the sentiments and principles which ought to actuate the Christian in his private capacity, we possess the standard to which the practice of churches should be uniformly adjusted.

Nor is it in this particular only, that the persons whose opinions we are controverting are betrayed into lamentable inconsistency. Their concessions on another branch of the subject, lay them open to the same imputation. They acknowledge that many Pædobaptists stand high in the favor of God ; enjoy intimate communion with the Redeemer ; and would, on their removal hence, be instantaneously admitted to glory. Now, it seems the suggestion of common sense, that the greater includes the less, that they who have a title to the most sublime privileges of Christianity, the favor of God, the fellowship of Christ, and the hope of glory, must be unquestionably entitled to that ordinance whose sole design is to prepare us for the perfect fruition of these blessings. To suppose it possible to have an interest in the great redemption, without being allowed to commemorate it, that he may possess the substance who is denied the shadow, and though qualified for the worship of heaven, be justly debarred from earthly ordinances, is such an anomaly as cannot fail to draw reprobation on the system of which it is the necessary consequence. Men will, ere long, tremble at the thought of being more strict than Christ, more fastidious in the selection of the members of the church militant, than he is in choosing the members of the church triumphant.

Hitherto our attention has been occupied in stating the argu-

ments in favor of mixed communion, and replying to the objections to that practice. It is but justice to the subject and to the reader, before we close the discussion, to touch on another topic.

In every inquiry relating to Christian duty, our first concern should undoubtedly be to ascertain the will of the Supreme Legislator ; but when this has been done to our satisfaction, we may be allowed to examine the practical tendency of different systems, the effect of which will be to confirm our preference of that course of action which we have found most consonant with the oracles of truth. We are far from resting the merits of our cause on the basis of expedience ; we are aware that whoever attempts to set the useful in opposition to the true, is misled by false appearances, and that it behoves us, on all occasions, fearless of consequences, to yield to the force of evidence. But having, in the preceding pages, proved, (we would hope to the satisfaction of the reader) that the practice of strict communion has no support from Scripture or reason, it cannot be deemed improper briefly to inquire into its tendency.

The first effect necessarily resulting from it, is a powerful prejudice against the party which adopts it. When all other denominations find themselves lying under an interdict, and treated as though they were heathens or publicans, they must be more than men not to resent it, or if they regard it with a considerable degree of apathy, it can only be ascribed to that contempt which impotent violence is so apt to inspire. We are incompetent judges of the light in which our conduct appears, to those against whom it is directed, but the more frequently we place ourselves in their situation, the less will be our surprise at the indications of alienation and disgust which they may evince. The very appellation of Baptist, together with the tenets by which it is designated, become associated with the idea of bigotry ; nor will it permit the mind which entertains that prejudice, to give an impartial attention to the evidence by which our sentiments are supported. With mingled surprise and indignation they behold us making pretensions which no other denomination of Protestants assumes, placing ourselves in an attitude of hostility towards the whole Christian world, and virtually claiming to be the only church of Christ upon earth. Fortified, as it is, by its claims to antiquity and universality, and combining in its exterior whatever is adapted to dazzle the imagination, and captivate the senses, there is yet nothing in the church of Rome that has excited more indignation and disgust than this very pretension. What then must be the sensation produced, when, in the absence of all these advantages, a sect, comparatively small and insignificant, erects itself on a solitary eminence from whence it repels the approach of all other Christians. The power of prejudice to arrest the progress

of inquiry is indeed to be lamented ; nothing could be more desirable, than that every opinion should, in the first instance, be judged of by its intrinsic evidence, without regard to the conduct of the persons who embrace it ; but the strength and independence of mind requisite to such an effort, is rather to be admired than expected. There are few who enter on the investigation of theological questions in that elevated state ; secret antipathies or predilections will be sure to instil their venom, and obscure the perception of truth, and the suggestions of reason.

By the stern rejection of the members of all other denominations, until they have embraced our distinguishing tenets, what do we propose to effect—to intimidate, or to convince? We can do neither. To intimidate is impossible, while there are others, far more numerous than ourselves, ready to receive them with open arms. The hope of producing conviction by such an expedient is equally groundless and chimerical, since conviction is the result of evidence, and no light whatever can be pretended to be conveyed by interdicting their communion, unless it be that it manifests our intolerance. We propose to extirpate an error, and we plant a prejudice ; and instead of attempting to soften and conciliate the minds of our opponents, we inflict a stigma. Professing serious concern that the ordinance of baptism, as it was practised in the first ages, is fallen into neglect, we attempt to revive an unpopular rite by a mode of procedure, which, without the remotest tendency towards the removal of error, or the elucidation of truth, answers no other purpose than to make *ourselves* unpopular.

By this preposterous conduct, we do all in our power to place our Pædobaptist brethren beyond the reach of conviction. Since it is unreasonable to expect, however attractive the ministry, that a pious Pædobaptist will stately attend where he must despair of ever becoming a member, and of enjoying the privileges to which every serious person is supposed to aspire ; he attaches himself, as a necessary consequence, to a connexion in which there is no such impediment, but where he is certain of hearing nothing but what will foster his prejudices and confirm his error. Thus he is excluded from the only connexion where the arguments for adult baptism are stated, and is exposed to the constant operation of an opposite species of instruction. The practice which we are reprobating is nearly equivalent to an inscription over the door, ‘ Let none but Baptists enter within these walls ’—an admirable expedient, truly, for diffusing the Baptist sentiments, about as rational as to send a man from London to Constantinople to study the evidences of Christianity.

Mr. Kinghorn is delighted with this separation of the Baptists from other denominations in the offices of devotion, avowing it as

his opinion, that no Pædobaptist can, without great impropriety, stately attend the ministry of one of our denomination. If we may judge from what he has written on this subject, he appears less anxious to promote and extend the peculiar tenets of the Baptists, than to preserve inviolate their sacred seclusion and solitude. His sentiments on this subject will probably remind the poetical reader of Gray's beautiful description of the bird of night, which

——— does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bowers,
Molest her ancient, solitary reign.

Whatever his intention may be, it must be obvious, that by the policy he recommends, of keeping the Baptists and Pædobaptists entirely separated from each other, even as hearers of the word, he is strengthening the barriers of party, building up a middle wall of partition, and by cutting off the channels of communication, and the means of conviction, resigning both to the entire and unmitigated operation of their respective systems. Is it possible to imagine any thing more calculated to stifle inquiry, to render the public mind stationary, and to perpetuate our divisions to the end of the world? From him who was really solicitous to extend the triumphs of truth, we should expect nothing would be more abhorrent than such a system; he surely would leave nothing unattempted to break down the rampart of prejudice, and by making the nearest approaches to his opponents, consistent with truth, avail himself of all the advantages which a generous confidence seldom fails to bestow, for insinuating his sentiments and promoting his views.

Of the tendency of mixed communion to promote a more candid inquiry into our principles, it is scarcely possible to doubt; whether it would have the effect of rapidly extending the Baptist denomination *as such*, is less certain. For were that practice universally to prevail, the mixture of Baptists and Pædobaptists in Christian societies would probably, ere long, be such, that the appellation of Baptist might be found, not so properly applicable to churches as to individuals, while some more comprehensive term might possibly be employed to discriminate the views of collective bodies. But what then? Are we contending for names, or for things? If the effect of a more liberal system shall be found to increase the number of those who return to the primitive practice of baptism, and thus follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, he must be possessed of a deplorable imbecility and narrowness of mind, who will lament the disappearance of a name, especially when it is remembered that whenever just views on this subject shall become universal, the name by which we are at present distinguished will necessarily cease. An honest solicitude for the

restoration of a divine ordinance to its primitive simplicity and purity, is not merely innocent, but meritorious; but if the ultimate consequence of such an improvement should be, to merge the appellation of a party in that which is derived from the divine Founder of our religion, it is an event which none but a bigot will regret.

It were well, however, if the evil resulting from the practice of strict communion were confined to its effect on other denominations. If I am not much mistaken, it exerts a pernicious influence on our own. Were it consistent with propriety, it would be easy to adduce exceptions: individuals have come within the narrow range of my own observation, whose temperament has been so happy, that they have completely surmounted the natural tendency of their principles, combining the greatest candor towards Pædobaptists, with a conscientious refusal of their communion. Such instances, however, must, in the nature of things, be rare. Generally speaking, the adoption of a narrow and contracted theory will issue in a narrow and contracted mind. It is too much to expect that a habit of treating all other Christians as aliens from the fold of Christ, and unworthy of a participation of the privileges of his church, can be generally unaccompanied with an asperity of temper, a proneness to doubt the sincerity, to censure the motives, and depreciate the virtues of those whom they are accustomed to treat with so much rigor. Conceiving themselves to be a highly privileged class, as the only legitimate members of his church, they are almost inevitably exposed to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and founding their separation, not on that which distinguishes the followers of Christ from the world, but on a point in which Christians dissent from each other, they are naturally tempted to attach superlative importance to the grounds of difference.

The history of the present controversy affords a melancholy confirmation of these remarks; for the few who have ventured to appear on the liberal side of the question have, for the most part, been assailed by ungenerous insinuations, and odious personalities. Their claim to be considered as Baptists is very reluctantly conceded, and the part they have taken has been imputed to the love of popularity, or to some still more unworthy motive. Some churches, in their zeal for strict communion, have even lost sight of their own principles, and substituted the doctrine opposed in these pages as a term of admission, instead of the ordinance of baptism. Others have refused the privilege of occasional communion to such as have been known to sit down with Pædobaptists at the Lord's table.

Leaving, however, to those to whom it may be more grateful,

the unwelcome office of exposing the infirmities of their brethren, let me close this subject by one more remark. In addition to all the other reasons for retracing our steps, we may, with great propriety, allege the spirit of the times, the genius of the age, distinguished, as it is, beyond all former example, by the union of Christians in the promotion of a common cause, and their merging their minor differences in the cultivation of great principles, and the pursuit of great objects. Instead of confining themselves, each to the defence of his own citadel, they are sallying forth in all directions, in order to make a powerful and combined attack on the kingdom of darkness. The church of Christ, no longer the scene of intestine warfare among the several denominations into which it is cantoned and divided, presents the image of a great empire, composed of distant, but not hostile provinces, prepared to send forth its combatants, at the command of its invisible Sovereign, to invade the dominions of Satan, and subdue the nations of the earth. The weapons of its warfare have already made themselves felt in the East and in the West, and wherever its banner is unfurled, it gathers around it, without distinction of name or sect, "the called, the chosen, the faithful," who, at the heart-thrilling voice of Him whose vesture is dipped in blood, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer, rush to the field, unmindful of every distinction but that of his friends and foes, and too eager for the combat to ask any other question, than, Who is on the Lord's side? Who? And is it possible, after mingling thus their counsels, their efforts, their prayers, and standing side by side, in the thickest of the conflict, in coming up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty, for them to turn their backs on each other, and refuse to unite at that table which is covered with the memorial of his love, and the fruits of his victory? No. As we hope, when the warfare of time is accomplished, and these mortal tabernacles, in which it is performed, shall be dissolved, to celebrate a never-ending feast, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the whole army of the faithful, of every age, from every clime, and from every tongue, let us begin by feasting together here, to present a specimen of that harmony and love, which are at once the element and the earnest of eternal felicity.

REVIEW

OF

FOSTER'S ESSAYS,

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REVIEW.

ESSAYS, in a Series of Letters, on the following Subjects; *On a Man's writing Memoirs of Himself; On Decision of Character; On the Application of the Epithet Romantic; On some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to Persons of cultivated Taste.* BY JOHN FOSTER. 2 vols. 12mo. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 458. *Seventh Edition.*

THE authors who have written on human nature, may be properly distinguished into two classes, the metaphysical and the popular. The former contemplate man in the abstract; and neglecting the different shades of character and peculiarities of temper by which mankind are diversified, confine their attention to those fundamental principles which pervade the whole species. In attempting to explore the secrets of mental organization, they assume nothing more for a basis than a mere susceptibility of impression, whence they labor to deduce the multiplied powers of the human mind. The light in which they choose to consider man in their researches, is not that of a being possessed already of the exercise of reason, and agitated by various sentiments and passions, but simply as capable of acquiring them; and their object is, by an accurate investigation of the laws which regulate the connexion of the mind with the external Universe, to discover in what manner they are actually acquired. They endeavor to trace back every mental appearance to its source. Considering the powers and principles of the mind as a complicated piece of machinery, they attempt to discover the *primum mobile*, or, in other words, that primary law, that ultimate fact, which is sufficiently comprehensive to account for every other movement. This attention to the internal operations of the mind, with a view to analyze its principles, is one of the distinctions of modern times. Among the ancients, scarcely any thing of this sort was known. Comprehensive theories, and subtle disquisitions, are not unfrequent in their writings; but they are chiefly employed for the illustration of different modes of virtue, and the establishment of different ideas of the supreme good. Their most abstracted speculations had al-

most always a practical tendency. The schoolmen, indeed, were deeply immersed in metaphysical speculations. They fatigued their readers in the pursuit of endless abstractions and distinctions ; but the design, even of these writers, seems rather to have been accurately to arrange and define the objects of thought, than to explore the mental faculties themselves. The nature of particular and universal ideas, time, space, infinity, together with the mode of existence to be ascribed to the Supreme Being, chiefly engaged the attention of the mightiest minds in the middle ages. Acute in the highest degree, and endued with a wonderful patience of thinking, they yet, by a mistaken direction of their powers, wasted themselves in endless logomachies, and displayed more of a teasing subtilty than of philosophical depth. They chose rather to strike into the dark and intricate by-paths of metaphysical science than to pursue a career of useful discovery ; and as their disquisitions were neither adorned by taste, nor reared on a basis of extensive knowledge, they gradually fell into neglect, when juster views in philosophy made their appearance. Still they will remain a mighty monument of the utmost which the mind of man can accomplish in the field of abstraction. If the metaphysician does not find in the schoolmen the materials of his work, he will perceive the study of their writings to be of excellent benefit in sharpening his tools. They will aid his acuteness, though they may fail to enlarge his knowledge.

When the inductive and experimental philosophy, recommended by Bacon, had, in the hands of Boyle and Newton, led to such brilliant discoveries in the investigation of matter, an attempt was soon made to transfer the same method of proceeding to the mind. Hobbes, a man justly infamous for his impiety, but of extraordinary penetration, first set the example ; which was not long after followed by Locke, who was more indebted to his predecessor than he had the candor to acknowledge. His celebrated Essay has been generally considered as the established code of metaphysics. The opinions and discoveries of this great man have since been enriched by large accessions, and, on some points, corrected and amended by the labors of Berkely, Hume, Reid, and a multitude of other writers. Still there seems to be a principle of mortality inherent in metaphysical science, which sooner or later impairs the reputation of its most distinguished adepts. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that there has never been a reputation of this kind, which has continued with undiminished lustre through the revolutions of a century. The fame of Locke is visibly on the decline ; the speculations of Malebranche are scarcely heard of in France ; and Kant, the greatest metaphysical name on the Continent, sways a doubtful sceptre amidst a host of oppo-

nents. It is not our intention to inquire at large into the reason of the transitory fame acquired by this class of writers. Whether it be that the science itself rests on a precarious foundation ; that its discoveries can never be brought to a decisive test ; that it is too remote from the business of life to be generally interesting ; that it does not compensate by its use, for its defects in the fascinations of pleasure ; and that it is not like the intricacies of law, interwoven with the institutions of society ; the fact itself is unquestionable. He who aspires to a reputation, that shall survive the vicissitudes of opinion and of time, must think of some other character than that of a metaphysician.

Grand and imposing in its appearance, it seems to lay claim to universal empire, and to supply the measures and the criteria of all other knowledge ; but it resembles in its progress the conquests of a Sesostris, and a Bacchus, who overran kingdoms and provinces with ease, but made no permanent settlements, and soon left no trace of their achievements.

The case is very different with the popular writers, who, without attempting to form a theory, or to trace to their first elements, the vast assemblage of passions and principles which enter into the composition of man, are satisfied with describing him as he is. These writers exhibit characters, paint manners, and display human nature in those natural and affecting lights under which it will always appear to the eye of an acute and feeling observer. Without staying to inquire why it is that men think, feel, reason, remember, are attracted by some objects, or repelled by others, they take them as they are, and delineate the infinitely various modifications and appearances assumed by our essential nature. From the general mass of human passions and manners, they detach such portions as they suppose will admit of the most beautiful illustrations, or afford the most instructive lessons. Next to a habit of self reflection, accompanied with an attentive survey of real life, writers of this kind are the best guides in the acquisition of that most important branch of knowledge, an acquaintance with mankind. As they profess to consider human nature under some particular aspect, their views are necessarily more limited than those of metaphysical writers ; but if they are less extensive they are more certain ; if they occupy less ground they cultivate it better. In the language of Bacon, "they come home to men's business and bosom." As they aim at the delineation of living nature, they can never deviate far from truth and reality, without becoming ridiculous ; while, for the fidelity of their representations, they appeal to the common sense of mankind, the dictates of which they do little more than embody and adorn. The system of Locke, or of Hartley, it is possible to conceive, may be explo-

ded by the prevalence of a different theory ; but it is absurd to suppose, that the remarks on life and manners, contained in the writings of Addison, or of Johnson, can ever be discredited by a future moralist. In the formation of a theory, more especially in matters so subtle and complicated as those which relate to the mind, the sources of error are various. When a chain of reasoning consists of many links, a failure of connexion in any part will produce a mass of error in the result, proportioned to the length to which it is extended. In a complicated combination, if the enumeration of particulars in the outset is not complete, the mistake is progressive and incurable. In the ideal philosophy of Locke, for example, if the sources of sensation are not sufficiently explored, or if there be, as some of the profoundest thinkers have suspected, other sources of ideas than those of sensation, the greater part of his system falls to the ground. The popular writers, of whom we have been speaking, are not exposed to such dangers. It is possible, indeed, that many particular views may be erroneous ; but as their attention is continually turned to living nature, provided they be possessed of competent talents, their general delineations cannot fail of being distinguished by fidelity and truth. While a few speculative men amuse themselves with discussing the comparative merits of different metaphysical systems, these are the writers, whose sentiments, conveyed through innumerable channels, form the spirit of the age ; nor is it to be doubted, that the *Spectator* and the *Rambler* have imparted a stronger impulse to the public mind than all the metaphysical systems in the world. On this account we are highly gratified when we meet with a writer, who, to a vein of profound and original thought, together with just views of religion and of morals, joins the talent of recommending his ideas by the graces of imagination, and the powers of eloquence. Such a writer we have the happiness of reviewing at present. Mr. Foster's name is probably new to most of our readers ; but if we may judge from the production before us, he cannot long be concealed from the notice and applause of the literary world. In an age of mediocrity, when the writing of books has become almost a mechanical art, and a familiar acquaintance with the best models has diffused taste, and diminished genius, it is impossible to peruse an author who displays so great original powers without a degree of surprise. We are ready to inquire by what peculiar felicity he was enabled to desert the trammels of custom, to break the spell by which others feel themselves bound, and to maintain a career so perfectly uncontrolled and independent. A cast of thought original and sublime, an unlimited command of imagery, a style varied, vigorous, and bold, are some of the distinguishing features of these very singular Essays. We add, with

peculiar satisfaction, that they breathe the spirit of piety and benevolence, and bear the most evident indications of a heart deeply attached to scriptural truths. Though Mr. F. has thought fit to give to his work the title of "*Essays in a Series of Letters*," the reader must not expect any thing in the epistolary style. They were written, the author informs us, in letters to a friend, but with a view to publication; and in their distinct developement of a subject, and fulness of illustration, they resemble regular dissertations, rather than familiar epistles. We could have wished, indeed, that he had suppressed the title of *Letters*, as it may excite in the reader an expectation of colloquial ease and grace, which will not be gratified in the perusal. A little attention to this circumstance, though it might have impaired the regularity of their method, would have rendered them more fascinating. The subjects appear to us well chosen, sufficiently uncommon to afford scope for original remarks, and important enough to call forth the exertions of the strongest powers. They are the following: 1. On a man's writing memoirs of himself: 2. On decision of character: 3. On the application of the epithet Romantic: 4. On some of the causes by which evangelical religion has been rendered less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.

We shall endeavor to give our readers an idea of the general design of each of these essays; and to enable them, by a few extracts, to judge of the manner in which that design is executed.

In the first essay, the author expatiates at large on the influence of external events in the formation of character. This influence he traces to four sources, instruction, companionship, reading, and attention to the state and manners of mankind.

Among the many objects calculated to form the character and impress the heart, Mr. F. enumerates natural scenery; at the same time deploring that want of fancy and sensibility, which often renders it productive of so little effect. The passage in which he adverts to this subject, is so beautiful, that we cannot prevail on ourselves to withhold it from the reader. He will see at once that the writer has viewed nature with the eye of a poet, and has deeply imbibed the delicious enchantment which he so eloquently describes.

'It might be supposed that the scenes of nature, an amazing assemblage of phenomena, if their effect were not lost through familiarity, would have a powerful influence on all opening minds, and transfuse into the internal economy of ideas and sentiment something of a character and a color correspondent to the beauty, vicissitude, and grandeur which continually press on the senses. On minds of genius they often have this effect; and Beattie's Minstrel may be as just as it is a fascinating description of such a spirit.

But on the greatest number this influence operates feebly ; you will not see the process in children, nor the result in mature persons. The charms of nature are objects only of sight and hearing, not of sensibility and imagination ; and even the sight and hearing do not receive impressions sufficiently distinct or forcible for clear recollection ; it is not, therefore, strange that these impressions seldom go so much deeper than the senses as to awaken pensiveness or enthusiasm, and fill the mind with an interior permanent scenery of beautiful images at its own command. This defect of fancy and sensibility is unfortunate amidst a creation infinitely rich with grand and beautiful objects, which, imparting something more than images to a mind adapted and habituated to converse with nature, inspire an exquisite sentiment that seems like the emanation of a spirit residing in them. It is unfortunate, I have thought within these few minutes, while looking out on one of the most enchanting nights of the most interesting season of the year, and hearing the voices of a company of persons, to whom I can perceive that this soft and solemn shade over the earth, the calm sky, the beautiful stripes of cloud, the stars, and waning moon just risen, are things not in the least more interesting than the walls, ceiling, and candle-light of a room.' Vol. I. pp. 26, 27. pp. 22, 23. *Seventh Edition.*

Toward the close of the essay, in tracing the steps by which some have arrived at the last stage of daring impiety, the denial of a God, the author evinces in a masterly manner the presumption of the atheist, and places the extreme absurdity of pretending to demonstrate the non-existence of a Deity, in a light in which we do not remember to have seen it exhibited. Speaking of a pretended heroism attached to atheistic impiety, he adds,

' But, indeed, it is heroism no longer, if he *knows* that there is no God. The wonder then turns on the great process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages, and what lights are requisite for *this* attainment ! This intelligence involves the very attributes of divinity, while a God is denied. For, unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot, with certainty, assign the cause of all that exists, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is precludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot know

that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must *know* that he does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection, and acts accordingly.' Vol. I. pp. 60—62. pp. 48, 49. *Seventh Edition.*

The next essay, *On decision of character* appears to us superior to the former. The subject is pursued with greater regularity, the conceptions are more profound, and the style is more chaste and classical. After placing in strong contrast the features of a decisive and of an irresolute character, he proceeds to analyze the elements of which the former is composed. Among these, he assigns the first place to a firm confidence in our own judgement; which, he justly observes, notwithstanding the general disposition of mankind to overrate their powers, is no common attainment. With those who are most disposed to think highly of their own abilities, it is common, when they arrive at the moment of action, to distrust their judgement; and, as the author beautifully expresses it, "their mind seems all at once placed in a misty vacuity, where it reaches round on all sides, and finds nothing to lay hold of." The next ingredient essential to decision of character, is a state of cogent feeling, an intense ardor of mind, precluding indifference and delay.

In addition to these qualities, courage is required, without which, it is obvious that resolutions the most maturely formed, are liable to vanish at the first breath of opposition. In the remaining part of the essay, Mr. F. illustrates the influence of several circumstances of an external nature which tend to form or to augment the quality of which he has been treating. The principal of these are *opposition*, *desertion*, and *success*. It would prolong this article too much, to attempt to follow the author in these particulars. Suffice it to remark, that under each of them will be found many just and important observations. He concludes with briefly recommending a discipline conducive to the attainment of a decisive character. He particularly insists on the propriety of inuring the mind to a habit of reasoning; and that, not in a superficial and desultory manner, but by steadily following the train till we reach a legitimate conclusion.

We cannot dismiss this part of the work, without presenting our readers with an extract from the character of Howard, whose virtues have been emblazoned by the gorgeous eloquence of Burke; but we are mistaken if they have ever been painted in a more masterly manner than in the following portrait.

'In this distinction (*decision*) no man ever exceeded, for instance, or ever will exceed, the late illustrious Howard. The energy of

his determination was so great, that if, instead of being habitual, it had been shown only for a short time, on particular occasions, it would have appeared a vehement impetuosity; but by being unintermitted it had an equability of manner, which scarcely appeared to exceed the tone of a calm constancy, it was so totally the reverse of any thing like turbulence or agitation. It was the calmness of an intensity, kept uniform by the nature of the human mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of the individual forbidding it to be less. The habitual passion of his mind was a measure of feeling almost equal to the temporary extremes and paroxysms of common minds: as a great river, in its customary state, is equal to a small or moderate one, when swollen to a torrent. The moment of finishing his plans in deliberation, and commencing them in action, was the same. I wonder what must have been the amount of that bribe, in emolument or pleasure, that would have detained him a week inactive after their final adjustment. The law which carries water down a declivity was not more unconquerable and invariable, than the determination of his feelings toward the main object. The importance of this object held his faculties in a state of excitement which was too rigid to be affected by lighter interests, and on which, therefore, the beauties of nature and of art had no power. He had no leisure feeling which he could spare, to be diverted among the innumerable varieties of the extensive scene which he traversed; all his subordinate feelings lost their separate existence and operation, by falling into the grand one. There have not been wanting trivial minds to mark this as a fault in his character. But the mere men of taste ought to be silent respecting such a man as Howard; he is above their sphere of judgement. The invisible spirits, who fulfil their commission of philanthropy among mortals, do not care about pictures, statues, and sumptuous buildings; and no more did he, when the time in which he must have inspected and admired them would have been taken from the work to which he had consecrated his life.* The curiosity which he might feel, was reduced to wait till the hour should arrive when its gratification should be presented by conscience, which kept a scrupulous charge of all his time, as the most sacred duty of that hour. If he was still at every hour, when it came, fated to feel the attractions of the fine arts but the second claim, they might be sure of their revenge, for no other man will ever visit Rome under such a despotic consciousness of duty, as to refuse himself time for surveying the magnificence of its ruins. Such a sin against taste is very far beyond the reach of common saintship to commit. It implied an inconceivable severity of conviction, that he had *one thing to do*; and that he, who would do some great thing in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle

* Mr. Howard, however, was not destitute of taste for the fine arts. His house at Cardington was better filled with paintings and drawings, than any other, on a small scale, that we ever saw.—*Rev.*

spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity. His attention was so strongly and tenaciously fixed on his object, that, even at the greatest distance, as the Egyptian pyramids to travellers, it appeared to him with a luminous distinctness as if it were nigh, and beguiled the toilsome length of labor and enterprise by which he was to reach it. It was so conspicuous before him, that not a step deviated from the direction, and every movement and every day was an approximation. As his method referred every thing he did and thought to the end, and as his exertion did not relax for a moment, he made the trial, so seldom made—what is the utmost effect which may be granted to the last possible efforts of a human agent; and therefore, what he did not accomplish, he might conclude to be placed beyond the sphere of mortal activity, and calmly leave to the immediate disposal of Providence. pp. 156—160. pp. 125—128. *Seventh Edition.*

We have one remark to make, before we conclude our review of this essay. We are a little apprehensive, that the glowing colors in which the imagination of Mr. F. has painted an unyielding constancy of mind, may tend to seduce some of his readers into an intemperate admiration of that quality, without duly distinguishing the object to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is sustained. We give our author full credit for the purity of his principles; we are firmly persuaded that he is not to be classed among the impious idolaters of mental energy. But we could wish that he had more fully admonished his readers to regard resolution of character, not as a virtue so much as a means of virtue, a mere instrument that owes its value entirely to the purpose to which it is employed; and that wherever nature has conferred it, an additional obligation is imposed of purifying the principles and regulating the heart. It might at first view, be thought impossible, as Mr. F. intimates, that men should be found, who are as resolute in the prosecution of criminal enterprises, as they could be supposed to be in the pursuit of the most virtuous objects. It is surely a melancholy proof of something wrong in the constitution of human nature, that a quality so important as that of energetic decision, is so little under the regulation of principle; that constancy is so much more frequently to be seen in what is wrong than in what is right; and, in fine, that the *world* can boast so many more heroes than the *church*.

In the third essay, *On the application of the epithet Romantic*, Mr. Foster takes occasion to expose the eagerness with which terms of censure are adopted by men, who, instead of calmly weighing the merits of an undertaking, or a character, think it sufficient to express their antipathy by some opprobrious appellation. The epithet *romantic*, holds a distinguished place in the vocabula-

ry of contempt. If a scheme of action, which it requires much benevolence to conceive, and much vigour to execute, be proposed, by many it will be thought completely exploded when they have branded it with the appellation of *romantic*. Thus selfishness and indolence, arraying themselves in the garb of wisdom, assume the pride of superiority, when they ought to feel the humiliation of guilt. To imitate the highest examples, to do good in ways not usual in the same rank of life, to make great exertions and sacrifices in the cause of religion and with a view to eternal happiness, to determine without delay to reduce to practice whatever we applaud in theory, are modes of conduct which the world will generally condemn as romantic, but which this author shows to be founded on the highest reason. In unfolding the true idea of the *romantic*, as applicable to a train of sentiments, or course of conduct, he ascribes whatever may be justly so denominated, to the predominance of the imagination over the other powers. He points out the symptoms of this disease, as apparent—in the expectation of a peculiar destiny, while the fancy paints to itself scenes of unexampled felicity—in overlooking the relation which subsists between ends and means—in counting upon casualities instead of contemplating the stated order of events,—and in hoping to realize the most momentous projects, without any means at all, or by means totally inadequate to the effect. Some of the illustrations which the author introduces on this part of his subject, are peculiarly happy. We are delighted to find him treating with poignant ridicule, those superficial pretenders, who, without disavowing any dependence on divine agency, hope to reform the world, and to bring back a paradisaical state, by the mere force of moral instruction. For the prospect of the general prevalence of virtue and happiness, we are indebted to revelation. We have no reason to suppose the minds of our modern infidels sufficiently elevated to have thought of the cessation of wars, and the universal diffusion of peace and love, but for the information which they have obtained from the Scriptures. From these, they derived the doctrine of a millenium; and they have received it as they have done every thing else, only to corrupt it: for, exploding all the means by which the Scriptures have taught us to expect the completion of this event, they rely merely on the resources of reason and philosophy. They impiously deck themselves with the spoils of Revelation, and take occasion from the hopes and prospects which she alone supplies, to deride her assistance, and to idolize the powers of human nature. That Being, who planted Christianity by miraculous interposition, and by the effusion of his Spirit produced such effects in the hearts of millions as afford a specimen and a pledge of an entire renovation, has also assured

us, that violence and injustice shall cease, and that *none shall hurt, or destroy in all his holy mountain, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God.* But, it seems, Revelation is to have no concern in this work ; philosophy is to effect every thing ; and we are to look to the Political Justice of Godwin, and the Moral Code of Volney, for that which Christians were so weak as to expect at the hand of Deity !

The conclusion which our author draws from the insufficiency of mere human agency, to effect that great renovation in the character and condition of men which Revelation teaches us to expect, is most just and consolatory. We should have been happy to transcribe the passage ; but lest we should exceed our limits, we refer our readers to Vol. II. pp. 87, 88, pp. 245—247. *Seventh Edition.*

The last essay in these volumes, attempts to assign *some of the causes that have rendered evangelical religion less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.* This essay is the most elaborate. Aware of the delicacy and difficulty of his subject, the author seems to have summoned all the powers of his mind, to enable him to grasp it in all its extent, and to present it in all its force and beauty. This essay is itself sufficient, in our opinion, to procure the author a brilliant and lasting reputation.

It is proper to remind our readers, that in tracing the causes which have tended to produce in men of taste an aversion to evangelical religion, Mr. F. avowedly confines himself to those which are of a *subordinate* class, while he fully admits the *primary cause* to be that *inherent corruption* of nature, which renders men strongly indisposed to any communication from Heaven. We could, however, have wished that he had insisted on this more largely. The Scriptures ascribe the rejection of the gospel to one general principle ; *the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The peculiar doctrines of Christianity are distinguished by a spirit irreconcilably at variance with that of the world. The deep repentance it enjoins, strikes at the pride and levity of the human heart. The mystery of an incarnate and crucified Saviour must necessarily confound the reason, and shock the prejudices, of a mind which will admit nothing that it cannot perfectly reduce to the principles of philosophy. The whole tenor of the life of Christ, the objects he pursued, and the profound humiliation he exhibited, must convict of madness and folly the favorite pursuits of mankind. The virtues usually practised in society, and the models of excellence most admired there, are so remote from that holiness which is enjoined in the New Testament, that it is impossible for a taste which is formed on the one, to perceive the

charms of the other. The happiness which it proposes in an union with God, and a participation of the image of Christ, is so far from being congenial to the inclinations of worldly men, that it can scarcely be mentioned without exciting their ridicule and scorn. General speculations on the Deity have much to amuse the mind, and to gratify that appetite for the wonderful, which thoughtful and speculative men are delighted to indulge. Religion, viewed in this light, appears more in the form of an exercise to the understanding, than a law to the heart. Here the soul expatiates at large, without feeling itself controlled or alarmed. But when evangelical truths are presented, they bring God so near, if we may be allowed the expression, and speak with so commanding a voice to the conscience, that they leave no alternative, but that of submissive acquiescence or proud revolt. As men of taste are, for the most part, men of the world, not at all distinguished from others by a greater familiarity with religious ideas, these observations are applicable to them in their utmost extent.

Though we thought it right to suggest these hints, we wish not to be understood to convey any censure on Mr. F. for confining his attention principally to others. In discussing more fully and profoundly some of the subordinate causes, which have come in aid of the primary one, to render men of cultivated taste averse to evangelical piety, we think he has rendered an important service to the public.

The first cause he assigns is, that of its being the religion of many weak and uncultivated minds; in consequence of which, it becomes inseparably associated, in the conceptions of many, with the intellectual poverty of its disciples, so as to wear a mean and degraded aspect. We regret that we cannot follow the author in his illustration of this topic. We must be content with observing, that he has exposed the weakness of this prejudice in a most masterly and triumphant manner.

The second cause which the author assigns, as having had, in his opinion, a considerable influence in prejudicing elegant and cultivated minds against evangelical piety, is the peculiarity of language, adopted in the discourses and books of its teachers, the want of a more classical form of diction, and the profusion of words and phrases which are of a technical and systematical cast.

We are inclined to think, with Mr. F. that the cause of religion has suffered considerably from the circumstance here mentioned. The superabundance of phrases, appropriated by some pious authors to the subject of religion, and never applied to any other purpose, has not only the effect of disgusting persons of taste, but of obscuring religion itself. As they are seldom defined, and never exchanged for equivalent words, they pass current without

being understood. They are not the vehicle, they are the substitute of thought. Among a certain description of Christians, they become, by degrees, to be regarded with a mystic awe; inso-much, that if a writer expressed the very same ideas in different phrases, he would be condemned as a heretic. To quit the magical circle of words in which many Christians suffer themselves to be confined, excites as great a clamor as the boldest innovation in sentiment. Controversies which have been agitated with much warmth, might often have been amicably adjusted, or even finally decided, could the respective partisans have been prevailed on to lay aside their predilection for phrases, and honestly resolve to examine their real import. In defiance of the dictates of candor and good sense, these have been obstinately retained; and have usually been the refuge of ignorance, the apple of discord, and the watch-words of religious hostility. In some instances, the evil which we lament, has sprung from a more amiable cause. The force and solemnity of devotional feelings are such, that they seem to consecrate every thing with which they have been connected; and as the bulk of pious people have received their religious impressions from teachers more distinguished for their simplicity and zeal, than for comprehension of mind and copiousness of language, they learn to annex an idea of sanctity to that set of phrases with which they have been most familiar. These become the current language of religion, to which subsequent writers conform, partly perhaps from indolence, and partly from the fear of offending their brethren.

To these causes, we may add, the contentious and sectarian spirit of modern times, which has taught the different parties of Christians to look on one another with an unnatural horror, to apprehend contamination from the very phrases employed by each other, and to invent each for itself a dialect as narrow and exclusive as their whimsical singularities. But, while we concur, in the main, with Mr. F. on this subject, we are disposed to think that he has carried his representations too far, both with respect to the magnitude of the abuse itself, and the probable advantages which would ensue on its removal. The repugnance of the human mind, in its unenlightened state, to the peculiarities of the Christian doctrine, is such, that we have little hope of its yielding to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Till it is touched and humbled by grace, we are apprehensive that it will retain its aversion, and not suffer itself to be cheated into an approbation of the gospel by any artifice of words. Exhibit evangelical religion in what colors you will, the worldly-minded and the careless will shrink from the obtrusion of unwelcome ideas. Cowper has become, in spite of his religion, a popular poet, but his success has

not been such as to make religion popular ; nor have the gigantic genius and fame of Milton shielded from the ridicule and contempt of his admirers, that system of religion which he beheld with awful adoration.

In treating subjects properly theological, we apprehend, great caution should be used, not to deviate wantonly and unnecessarily from the phraseology of Scripture. The apostle tells us, that in preaching the gospel, he did not use the enticing words of man's wisdom, but such words as the Holy Ghost taught him. We do not, indeed, contend, that in the choice of *every* particular word or phrase, he was immediately inspired ; but we think it reasonable to believe, that the unction which was on his heart, and the perfect illumination that he possessed, led him to employ such terms in the statement of the mysteries of Christianity, as were better adapted than any other, to convey their real import ; which we are the more inclined to conclude, from observing the sameness of phraseology which pervades the writings of the Apostles, when they are treating on the same subject. As the truths which the revelation of the New Testament unfolds, are perfectly original, and transcendantly important, it might naturally be expected, that the communication of them would give birth to an original cast of phraseology, or, in other words, a steady adherence to certain terms, in order to render the ideas which they conveyed, fixed, precise, and unchangeable.

In teaching the principles of every science, it is found necessary to select or invent terms, which, though originally of a laxer signification, are afterwards restricted and confined to *one peculiar modification of thought*, and constitute the technical language of that science. Such terms are always capable of being defined ; (for mere words convey nothing to the mind ;) but to substitute a definition in their place, would be tedious circumlocution ; and to exchange the term itself for a different one, would frequently lead to dangerous mistakes.

In the original elementary parts of a language, there are, in truth, few or no synonymes ; for what should prompt men, in the early period of literature, to invent a word, that neither conveyed any new idea, nor enabled them to present an old one with more force and precision. In the progress of refinement, indeed, regard to copiousness and harmony, has enriched language with many exotics, which are merely those words in a foreign language, that perfectly correspond to terms in our own ; as *felicity* for *happiness*, *celestial* for *heavenly*, and a multitude of others. Since, then, the nature of language is such, that no two terms are exactly of the same force and import, (except in the case last mentioned,) we cannot but apprehend that dangerous consequen-

es would result from a studied attempt to vary from the standard phraseology, where the statement of doctrines is concerned ; and that, by changing the terms, the ideas themselves might be changed or mutilated. In teaching a religion designed for the use and benefit of all mankind, it is certainly desirable that the technical words, the words employed in a peculiar and appropriate sense, should be few ; but to fix and perpetuate the ideas, and to preserve *the faith once delivered to the saints* from the caprices of fancy, and the dangers of innovation, it seems necessary that there should be some. We are inclined to think that, in inculcating Christian morality, and in appeals and addresses to the heart, a much greater latitude may be safely indulged, than in the statement of *peculiar doctrines* ; and that a more bold and varied diction, with a wider range of illustration and allusion than is usually employed, would often be attended with the happiest effect. Mr. Foster has given in many parts of these volumes, beautiful specimens of what we intend.

With respect to the copious use of Scripture language, which Mr. F. condemns, (in our opinion with too much severity,) as giving an uncouth and barbarous air to theological books, we prefer a middle course ; without applauding the excess to which it is carried by many pious writers on the one hand ; or wishing it to be kept so entirely apart as Mr. F. contends, on the other. To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered in a literary view, which are universally acknowledged ; it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God ; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolations. Intimately associated in his mind with every thing dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other : and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse, which nothing else can supply. Besides, is there not room to apprehend, that a studied avoidance of the Scripture phraseology, and a care to express all that it is supposed to contain in the forms of classical diction, might ultimately lead to a neglect of the Scriptures themselves, and a habit of substituting flashy and superficial declamation, in the room of the saving truths of the gospel ? Such an apprehension is but too much verified by the most celebrated sermons of the French ; and still more by some modern compositions in our own language, which usurp that title. For devotional impression, we conceive that a very considerable tincture of the language of Scripture, or at least such a coloring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best.

It is impossible to establish an universal rule, since different

methods are equally adapted to different purposes ; and therefore we are willing to allow with Mr. F. that where the fashionable and the gay are addressed, and the prejudices arising from a false refinement are to be conciliated, whatever in the diction might repel by an appearance of singularity, should be carefully shunned. Accordingly, we equally admire, in the *Rise and Progress of Religion*, by Dr. Doddridge, and in the *Rural Philosophy* of Mr. Bates, the dexterity with which these excellent writers have suited their composition to their respective classes of readers. On the whole, let it once for all be remembered, that men of taste form a very small part of the community, of no greater consequence in the eyes of their Creator than others ; that the end of all religious discourse is the salvation of souls ; and that to a mind which justly estimates the weight of eternal things, it will appear a greater honor to have converted a sinner from the error of his way, than to have wielded the thunder of a Demosthenes, or to have kindled the flame of a Cicero.

We hasten to close this article, by making a few observations on the last cause which our author has assigned, for the general distaste that persons of polite and elegant attainments usually discover toward evangelical religion. This is, the neglect and contempt with which it has been almost constantly treated by our fine writers, of whose delinquency, in this respect, the author takes a wide and extensive survey, exposing their criminality with a force of eloquence that has perhaps never before been exerted on this subject. Though his attention is chiefly directed to the influence of modern literature, yet as the writings of the ancients, and especially of the poets, have had a powerful operation in forming the taste and sentiments of succeeding generations, he has extended his notice to these, and has made some most striking animadversions on the ancient authors of the epopee, and particularly on Homer.

We must do justice to his intrepidity in venturing to attack the idol of all classical scholars ; nor can he have failed to foresee the manner in which it will be attempted to be repelled. They will remind him, that the lawfulness of defensive war has seldom been called in question ; that the one in which Homer's heroes were engaged, was not only just but meritorious, being undertaken to avenge a most signal affront and injury ; that no subject could be more suited to the epic muse, either on account of its magnitude, or the deep interest it excited ; that having chosen it, the poet is to be commended for throwing into it all the fire of which it was susceptible ; that to cherish in the breasts of youth a gallant and warlike spirit, is the surest defence of nations ; and that this spirit, under proper regulations, constitutes that *θυμοειδης* which Plato

extols so highly in his republic, as the basis of a manly, heroic character. This, and much more than this, will be said; but when our Grecians have spent all their arrows, it will still remain an incontestible fact, that an enthusiastic admiration of the *Iliad* of Homer, is but a bad preparation for relishing the beauties of the New Testament. What then is to be done? Shall we abandon the classics, and devote ourselves solely to the perusal of modern writers, where the maxims inculcated, and the principles taught, are little, if at all, more in unison with those of Christianity?—a fact, which Mr. F. acknowledges and deplores. While things continue as they are, we are apprehensive, therefore, that we should gain nothing by neglecting the unrivalled productions of genius left us by the ancients, but a deterioration of taste, without any improvement in religion. The evil is not to be corrected by any partial innovation of this kind. Until a more Christian spirit pervades the world, we are inclined to think that the study of the classics, is on the whole, advantageous to public morals, by inspiring an elegance of sentiment, and an elevation of soul, which we should in vain seek for elsewhere.

The total inattention of the great majority of our fine writers, to all the distinguishing features of the religion they profess, affords a most melancholy reflection. It has no doubt excited the notice of many, and has been deeply lamented; but it has never been placed in a light so serious and affecting, as in the volumes before us. In the observations which our author makes on the *Essay on Man*, we are delighted and surprised, to find at once so much philosophical truth and poetical beauty. His critique on the writings of Addison and Johnson, evinces deep penetration; and as it respects the former, is uncommonly impressive and important.

We take our leave of this work, with sincere reluctance. For the length to which we have extended our review, the subject must be our apology. It has fared with us as with a traveller who passes through an enchanting country, where he meets with so many beautiful views and so many striking objects which he is loath to quit, that he loiters till the shades of the evening insensibly fall upon him. We are far, however, from recommending these volumes as faultless. Mr. F.'s work is rather an example of the power of genius, than a specimen of finished composition; it lies open in many points to the censure of those minor critics, who by the observation of a few technical rules may easily avoid its faults, without reaching one of its beauties. The author has paid too little attention to the construction of his sentences. They are for the most part too long, sometimes involved in perplexity, and often loaded with redundancies. They have too much of the looseness of an harangue, and too little of the compact elegance

of regular composition. An occasional obscurity pervades some parts of the work. The mind of the writer seems at times to struggle with conceptions too mighty for his grasp, and to present confused masses, rather than distinct delineations of thought. This, however, is to be imputed to the originality, not the weakness of his powers. The scale on which he thinks is so vast, and the excursions of his imagination are so extended, that they frequently carry him into the most unbeaten track, and among objects where a ray of light glances in an angle only, without diffusing itself over the whole. On ordinary topics, his conceptions are luminous in the highest degree. He places the idea which he wishes to present in such a flood of light, that it is not merely visible itself, but it seems to illumine all around it. He paints metaphysics, and has the happy art of arraying what in other hands would appear cold and comfortless abstractions, in the warmest colors of fancy. Without the least affectation of frivolous ornaments, without quitting his argument in pursuit of imagery, his imagination becomes the perfect handmaid of his reason, ready at every moment to spread her canvass, and present her pencil. But what pleases us most, and affords us the highest satisfaction, is to find such talents enlisted on the side of true Christianity ; nor can we help indulging a benevolent triumph at the accession of powers to the cause of evangelical piety, which its most distinguished opponents would be proud to possess.

REVIEW

OF

ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION,

ORIGINALLY INSERTED IN

THE LONDON ELECTIC REVIEW.

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OF
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PREFACE.

IT was the opinion of some sincere friends of religion, that a republication of the following strictures might have its use in certain quarters, where the literary journal in which they first appeared may possibly not have extended. The writer of these remarks has nothing in view but the promotion of Christian charity, the vindication of calumniated innocence, and the counteraction of those insidious arts, by which designing men are seeking to advance their personal interest or those of a party, at the expense of truth and justice. How far the author here animadverted upon, falls under this description, must be left to the decision of an impartial public. If it be thought that more commendation ought to have been given, in the following strictures, to those parts of the work which are confessedly unexceptionable, the writer must be allowed to remark, that the effect of what is good in the performance is entirely defeated by the large infusion of what is of an opposite quality. In appreciating the merits of a writer, the general tendency of his work should be principally regarded, without suffering the edge of censure to be abated by such a mixture of truth as only serves to give a safer and wider circulation to misrepresentation and falsehood.

It has been deemed a capital omission in the following critique, that no notice is taken of the author's illiberal treatment of

the Puritans. This omission arose partly from a wish to avoid prolixity, and partly from an apprehension it would lead to a discussion not perfectly relevant to the matter in hand. It would be no difficult matter to construct such a defence of the Puritans, as would leave this or any other author very little to reply ; but to do justice to the subject would require a deduction of facts, and a series of arguments, quite inconsistent with the limits to which we are confined. To oppose assertion to assertion, and invective to invective, could answer no end but the reviving animosities which we should be happy to see for ever extinguished. The controversy betwixt the Puritans and their opponents, turns entirely on these two questions. Has any religious society, assuming the name of a church, a right to establish new terms of communion, distinct from those enjoined by Christ and his apostles ? Admitting they have such a right, ought these terms to consist in things which the imposers acknowledge to be indifferent, and the party on whom they are enjoined look upon as sinful ? Is not this a palpable violation of the apostolical injunction, *Him that is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations* ? We are persuaded we speak the sentiments of some of the best men in the Church of England, when we assert, that the basis of communion was made narrower at the Reformation than is consistent with the dictates of Christian charity or sound policy, and that the Puritans were treated with a severity altogether unjustifiable. The author of 'Zeal without Innovation' declares himself "dissatisfied with the trite remark that there were faults on both sides, when the guilt of aggression rests so clearly on the heads of the Non-conformists." To infer their guilt as aggressors, because they were the first to complain, is begging the question at issue. Before we are entitled to criminate them on this head, it is requisite to inquire into the *justice* of their complaints. They who first discover a truth, are naturally the first to impugn the opposite error. They who find themselves aggrieved, are necessarily the first to complain. So that to attach culpability to the party which betrays the first symptoms of dissatisfaction, without farther inquiry, is to confer on speculative error, and on practical tyranny a claim to unalterable perpetuity—a doctrine well suited to the mean and slavish maxims inculcated by this writer. The learned Warburton was as little satisfied as himself with the trite remark of their being faults on both sides, but for an opposite reason. "It would be hard," he affirms, "to say who are most to blame, those who oppose established authority for things indifferent ; or that authority which rigidly insists on them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender, misinformed consciences ; I say it would be hard to solve this, had not the Apostle done it for us, where he says, we that are

strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, *and not to please ourselves*. I myself, says he, do so, and all for the gospel's sake. This is the man who tells us he had fought a good fight and overcome. And we may believe him, for, in this contention, he is always the conqueror who submits."

When the question is fairly put, whether a tender conscience, admitting it to be erroneous, shall be forced, or the imposition of things confessedly indifferent be dropped, it can surely require but little sagacity to return a decisive answer. The arguments which induced Locke to give his suffrage in favor of the Nonconformists, the reasons which prevailed on Baxter and on Howe to quit stations of usefulness in the church and doom themselves to an unprofitable inactivity, will not easily be deemed light or frivolous. The English nation has produced no men more exempt from the suspicion of weakness or caprice than these.

Desirous of composing, rather than inflaming, the dissensions which unhappily subsist among Christians, we decline entering farther on this topic ; heartily praying with the Apostle, that "grace may be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

REVIEW.

ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION: or the Present State of Religion and Morals considered; with a View to the Dispositions and Measures required for its Improvement. To which is subjoined an Address to young Clergymen, intended to guard them against some prevalent Errors.

There are some works which require to be viewed only in a literary light. No important principles are discussed, nor any momentous interests at stake. When this is the case, nothing more is necessary than for a reviewer to exhibit the author's plan, and to give an impartial judgement on the ability with which it is executed. If the merit of the performance be very conspicuous, it is the less necessary to multiply words in order to show it; and if it have little or none, it need not be conducted to the land of forgetfulness with the pomp of criticism. For this reason, the utility of periodical criticism may, in a literary view, be fairly questioned; as it seems like an attempt to anticipate the decision of the public, and prematurely to adjust those pretensions, which, if left to itself, it will be sure to adjust, in time, with the most perfect impartiality. A reviewer may give a momentary popularity to what deserves to be forgotten, but he can neither withhold nor bestow a lasting fame. Cowper, we will venture to say, is not the less admired because the *Critical Review*, with its usual good taste and discernment, could discover in him no traces of poetic genius.

There are other works, which owe their importance more to the subjects on which they treat, and their tendency to inflame the prejudices, and strike in with the humor of the public, than to any extraordinary ability. Their infection renders them formidable. They are calculated to increase the violence of an epidemic disease. The matter of contagion ought not to be slighted on account of the vehicle by which it is transmitted. We are sorry to be under the necessity of classing the performance before us with

works of that nature ; but our conviction of its deserving that character must be our apology for bestowing a degree of attention upon it, to which it is not otherwise entitled. The author's professed design is to present a view of the state of religion and morals, and to suggest such remedies as are best adapted to correct the disorders under which they languish. A more noble and important undertaking cannot be conceived. We have only to lament that, in the pursuit of it, he betrays so many mean partialities, and ungenerous prejudices, as utterly disqualify him for doing justice to the subject. While we would wish to give him credit for *some* portion of good intention, we are firmly convinced, that had *his eye been single, his whole body had been more full of light*. In an attempt to trace the causes of degeneracy in religion and morals, and to point out the proper correctives, nothing is more requisite than a large and catholic spirit, totally emancipated from the shackles of party, joined with extensive knowledge and a discriminating judgement. In the first of these qualities, the author is lamentably deficient. He looks at every thing so entirely through the medium of party, that, though he cannot be said to be absolutely blind, he is quite incapable of seeing afar off. His remarks are often shrewd ; such as indicate a mind awake, and attentive to the scenes which have passed before him. He is sometimes acute, never comprehensive ; accurate in details, with little capacity for tracing the consequences, and unfolding the energy of general principles. While the title of the work leads us to expect his attention would be entirely directed to the best means of promoting the moral improvement of mankind, the watchful reader will perceive there are *subordinate objects*, which he is at least equally solicitous to advance. There is a complication in his views, a *wheel within a wheel*, quite incompatible with simplicity of mind, and perfect purity of intention. There appears too much reason to regard him as an artful, bigotted partisan, acting under the disguise of a philanthropist and a reformer. Severe as this censure may seem, we are persuaded our readers will acknowledge its justice, when they are apprised of the leading statements and positions contained in this singular work.

The author sets out with descanting on the state of religion in this country, which he represents as very deplorable ; in proof of this, he adduces, among other facts, the violation of the Christian Sabbath, and the prevailing neglect of public worship. As these symptoms of degeneracy are not found in an equal degree among Dissenters and Methodists, he is led, by the course of his subject, to notice the state of religion amongst them, where he acknowledges there is no room to complain of a deficiency of zeal. He does not affect to deny that their teachers exhibit the great truths

of Christianity with energy and effect, and that much good has resulted from their labors. We should naturally suppose a pious man would here find ground for satisfaction; and that, however he might regret the mixture of error with useful efforts, he would rejoice to perceive that real and important good was done any where. It is but justice to him, to let him convey his feelings on this subject in his own words.

‘From the sad state of things represented in the preceding section, many turn with pleasure to what is passing among our Separatists, whose places of worship generally exhibit a very different scene to our parish churches. Here there appears to be some life and effect. The officiating minister has not half empty pews to harangue, but a crowded auditory “hanging on his lips.” Whether, however, in what is now before us we shall find no cause of uneasiness, when all its circumstances are considered, admits of great doubt.

‘It cannot be denied, that with all the fanaticism charged on Separatists, (and it is to be feared with great truth in some instances,) many a profligate has been reclaimed, and much good in other ways has been done among the lower orders, by the labors of their ministers. From these circumstances, and the known ignorance and dissoluteness of the times, many, without the least degree of adverse intention to our Established Church, have, in the simplicity of their hearts, concurred in forwarding the endeavors of the Separatists. And hence it is, that in all the more populous parts of the country, we see that multitude of dissenting chapels, which of late years has increased, and is still increasing.

‘To some good men, free from all prejudice against the Church of England, it is matter of no regret, that the number of Separatists increase, provided there be with this circumstance an increasing regard to Christianity. With such persons, all consideration of forms, and modes of worship, is sunk in the greater importance of genuine faith and piety. But it enters not into the thoughts of such persons, that “tares may spring up with the wheat;” and that what at present has a good effect, may operate to the production of something hereafter of a very different nature. Now such we conceive to be the nature of the case before us. We have reason to apprehend ill consequences from increasing separatism; with whatever zeal for important truths, and with whatever success in propagating them, it be at present accompanied.

‘And first, it may be observed, that it goes to annihilation of the Established Church as a national institution. The bulk of every newly raised congregation of Separatists is composed of persons educated within the pale of the Church of England. Of these many are heads of families, or likely to become so. By commencing Dissenters, they, and their posterity, however multiplied, are broken off from the national church. These detachments from the establishment, going on as they have done of late years, must consequently

increase the number of those who prefer a differently constituted church ; and these may in time amount to such a majority, as to render it again a question with those in power, whether the Church of England shall any longer have the support of the state.'—pp. 14—17.

That the increase of Dissenters, *in itself considered*, cannot be a pleasing circumstance to a conscientious Churchman, is certain ; and if this is all the author means to say, he talks very idly. The true question evidently is, whether the good accruing from the labors of Dissenters is a proper subject of congratulation, *although* it may be attended with this incidental consequence, an increased separation from the Established Church. In a word, Is the promotion of genuine Christianity, or the advancement of an external communion, the object primarily to be pursued ? Whatever excellence may be ascribed to our national establishment by its warmest admirers, still it is a human institution ; an institution to which the first ages of the church were strangers, to which Christianity was in no degree indebted for its original success, and the merit of which must be brought to the test of utility. It is in the order of means. As an expedient devised by the wisdom of our ancestors, for promoting true religion, it is entitled to support just so far as it accomplishes its end. This end, however, is found in some instances to be accomplished by means which are of a different description. A fire, which threatens immediate destruction, is happily extinguished before it has had time to extend its ravages ; but it is extinguished by persons who have volunteered their services, without waiting for the engineers, who act under the direction of the police. Here is *zeal*, but unfortunately accompanied with *innovation*, at which our author is greatly chagrined. How closely has he copied the example of St. Paul, who rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from envy and contention ! With him, the promulgation of divine truth was an object so much at heart, that he was glad to see it accomplished, even from the most criminal motives, and by the most unworthy instruments. With our author, the dissemination of the same truth, by some of the best of men, and from the purest motives, is matter of lamentation and regret. It requires little attention to perceive he has been taught in a different school from the Apostles, and studied under a different master.

The eternal interests of mankind are either mere chimeras, or they are matters of infinite importance ; compared with which, the success of any party, the increase of any external communion whatever, is mere dust in the balance ; and for this plain reason, that the promotion of these interests is the very end of Christianity itself. However divided good men may have been with re-

spect to the propriety of legislative interference in the affairs of religion, the arguments by which they have supported their respective opinions, have been uniformly drawn from the supposed tendency of such interference, or the contrary, to advance the moral improvement of mankind ; and, supposing this to be ascertained, the superior merit of the system to which that tendency belongs was considered as decided. Viewed in this light, the problem is extensive, affording scope for much investigation ; while the authority of religion remains unimpaired, and the disputants on each side are left at liberty to indulge the most enlarged sentiments of candor towards each other. Such were the principles on which Hooker and the ablest of his successors rested their defence of the Established Church. The High Church Party, of which Mr. Daubeny may be looked upon as the present leader, have taken different grounds. Their system is neither more nor less than Popery, faintly disguised, and adapted to the meridian of England. The writer before us, without avowing the sentiments of Daubeny, displays nearly the same intolerance and bigotry, under this peculiar disadvantage, that his views want the cohesion of system, his bigotry the support of principle. This formal separation of the interests of the church from those of true religion, must inevitably produce the most deplorable consequences. Will the serious and conscientious part of the public be led to form a favorable opinion of a religious community, by hearing it avowed by her champions, that men had better be suffered eternally to perish, than to find salvation out of her pale ? Will they not naturally ask what those *higher ends* can be, in comparison of which the eternal welfare of a large portion of our fellow creatures is deemed a trifle ? Could such a spirit be supposed generally prevalent in the clergy of the Established Church, it would at once lose all that is sacred in their eyes, and be looked upon as a mere combination to gain possession of power and emolument under pretence of religion. We are mistaken, if much mischief has not already accrued from the indulgence of this spirit. It has evenomed the ill qualities naturally generated by the denomination of a party. It has produced serious injury to the church, by emboldening men to appear in her defence, who bring nothing into the controversy but overweening pride, ceremonial hypocrisy, and priestly insolence. Haughty, contemptuous airs, a visible disdain of the scruples of tender consciences, and frequently of piety itself, except under one garb and fashion, have been too generally assumed by her champions. These features have given inexpressible disgust to pious and candid minds ; hurt, as they well may be, to see a religious community, however numerous or respectable, continually vaunting itself, laying exclusive

claims to purity and orthodoxy, and seeming to consider it as a piece of condescension to suffer any other denomination to subsist. They cannot dismiss it from their minds, that humility is a virtue proper to a church as well as to an individual, and that ecclesiastical pride may happen to be as offensive to Heaven, as pride of any other kind. In the church of Rome these qualities have been ever conspicuous; but finding nothing of this sort in an equal degree, in any other Protestant communion, and recollecting that "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be laid low," one naturally feels some apprehension that they may not pass unpunished, though they are found in the precincts of a cathedral.

Our author derives no satisfaction from the acknowledged success of Dissenters in turning sinners from the error of their way, from an apprehension that their success may eventually prove injurious to the establishment. He pretends to foresee, from this cause, a continual transfer of hearers from the church to the conventicle. We beg leave to ask the writer, how such a consequence can ensue, but from the superior zeal and piety of sectaries? To suppose that with only an *equal* share of these qualities they will be able to make successful inroads in the church, is to abandon the defence of the hierarchy altogether; since this is acknowledging a radical defect in the system, which operates as a dead weight on its exertions, and disqualifies it for maintaining its ground against rivals; that in short, instead of being the most efficacious mode of exhibiting and impressing revealed truth, it is intrinsically weak and ineffectual. For that system must surely be acknowledged to be so, which is incapable of interesting the people, and which, by rendering public worship less attractive, produces a general preference of a different mode. To suppose this to be the case, is to suppose something essentially wrong, which should be immediately examined and corrected. On this supposition, the men are acquitted; the system is arraigned. As this, however, is far from being the opinion of the author, the conclusion returns with irresistible force, that a permanent increase of Dissenters can *only* arise from their superior piety and zeal. Now these are really, in our opinion, qualities too valuable to be dispensed with, whatever interests they may obstruct. Regretting, deeply as we may, in common with our author, that they should have formed an alliance so unfortunate, we must still think it better, not only for their possessors but for the world at large, for them to be found even here, than to have no existence at all; and it is upon this point we are at issue with this *conscientious* reformer. For our parts, we are really so old fashioned and puritanical, that we had rather behold men awakened and converted

among Dissenters and Methodists, than see them sleep the sleep of death in the arms of an establishment.

But our author, it seems, is filled with pious alarm for the cause of *orthodoxy*, from the increasing separation from the church. 'By the sound doctrine its instituted forms express, it will,' he tells us, 'as long as it stands, be a witness to the truth, in periods the most barren of ministerial qualification; a rallying point to all truly Christian pastors; and an *accredited voucher for the purity of their instruction*,' p. 17. How much were the primitive Christians to be pitied, who were unhappily destitute of any such 'voucher,' and had nothing to secure the permanence of truth, but the promised presence of Christ, the illumination of the Spirit, and the light of the Scriptures—poor substitutes, undoubtedly, for the solid basis of creeds and formularies! We should readily concur with the author in his views of the security derived from the subscription of articles, if we could forget a few stubborn facts which we beg leave humbly to recall to his recollection. Is it not a fact, that the nature and extent of the assent and consent signified by subscription, has been the subject of a very thorny controversy, in which more ill faith and chicanery have been displayed than were ever known out of the school of the Jesuits; and that the issue of this controversy has been to establish very generally the doctrine of Paley, that none are excluded by it but Quakers, Papists, and Baptists? Is it not a fact, that the press is teeming every week with publications of the most acrimonious description, written by professed churchmen, against persons who have incurred this acrimony merely by their attachment to these articles? Is it not a fact, that the doctrines they exhibit are so scorned and detested in this country, that whoever seriously maintains them is stigmatized with the name of 'Methodist,' and that that part of the clergy who preach them are *for that reason alone* more insulted and despised by their brethren than even the Dissenters themselves? It is with peculiar effrontery that this author insists on subscription to articles as a sufficient security for the purity of religious instruction, when it is the professed object of his work to recall his contemporaries to that purity. If he means that the 'voucher' he speaks of answers its purpose because *it is credited*, he is plainly laughing at the simplicity of the people; if he means to assert it is *entitled* to credit, we must request him to reflect how he can vindicate himself from the charge of '*speaking lies in hypocrisy*.'

A long course of experience has clearly demonstrated the inefficacy of creeds and confessions to perpetuate religious belief. Of this the only faithful depository is, not that which is *written with ink*, but on the *fleshy tables of the heart*. The spirit of er-

ror is too subtle and volatile to be held by such chains. Whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history must know, that public creeds and confessions have occasioned more controversies than they have composed ; and that when they ceased to be the subject of dispute, they have become antiquated and obsolete. A vast majority of the Dissenters of the present day hold precisely the same religious tenets which the Puritans did two centuries ago, because it is the instruction they have uniformly received from their pastors ; and for the same reason the articles of the national church are almost effaced from the minds of its members, because they have long been neglected or denied by the majority of those who occupy its pulpits. We have never heard of the church of Geneva altering its confession, but we know that Voltaire boasted there was not in his time a Calvinist in the city ; nor have we heard of any proposed amendment in the creed of the Scotch, yet it is certain the doctrines of that creed are preached by a rapidly decreasing minority of the Scottish clergy. From these and similar facts we may fairly conclude, that the doctrines of the church, with or without subscription, are sure to perpetuate themselves where they are faithfully preached ; but that the mere circumstance of their being subscribed, will neither secure their being preached nor believed.

‘ Separatism,’ (says the author) ‘ has *no fixed or perpetual character* ; what it is at present, we may by attentive observation be able to pronounce ; but no human foresight can ascertain what it will be hereafter. Though now in its numerous chapels the soundest doctrine should be heard, we have no security that they will not become the schools of heresy. Here if the licentious teacher get a footing, he moulds the whole system of ministration to his views ; not a prayer, not a psalm, not a formulary of any kind, but in this case will become the vehicle of error.’ pp. 17, 18.

How far, in creatures so liable to mistake, a fixed and perpetual character is an enviable attribute, we shall not stay to inquire ; with what right it is claimed on this occasion, it is not very difficult to determine. The thirty-nine articles will unquestionably always remain the same, that is, they will always be the thirty-nine articles ; but it is not quite so certain that they are universally believed, much less that they will always continue to be so ; and least of all that, after having ceased to be believed, they will receive the sanction of every successive legislature. For our parts, such is our simplicity, that when we read of a fixed and perpetual character, our attention is always wandering to men, to some mode of thinking, or feeling, to which such perpetuity belongs, instead of resting in the useful contemplation of pen, ink, and paper.

With every disposition, however, to do the author justice, we have some fear for the success of his argument; suspecting the Dissenters will be ready to reply, 'Our pastors cordially embrace the doctrine contained in your Articles; and as this cannot be affirmed of the majority of yours, the question of perpetuity is reduced to this amusing theorem,—In which of two given situations will a doctrine last the longest, where it is believed without being subscribed, or where it is subscribed without being believed?'

The equal justice it is our duty to maintain, obliges us to notice another aspersion which the author casts upon Dissenters.

'Every addition Separatism makes to its supporters, alters the proportion existing in this country between the monarchical and the democratic spirit; either of which preponderating to a considerable degree, might be productive of the most serious consequences. For it is certain, that as our church establishment is favorable to monarchy; so is the constitution of our dissenting congregations to democracy. The latter principle is cherished in all communities, where the power resides not in one, or a few, but is shared, in certain proportions, among all the members; which is the case in most of the religious societies under consideration. Let it be remembered, then, that if religion increase in this way, there is that increasing with it which is not religion; there is something springing up with it which is of a different nature, and which will be sure to stand, whether that better thing with which it may grow, do or not.' p. 20.

In this statement, the author has exhibited his usual inattention to facts. That the people had in the first ages a large share in ecclesiastical proceedings, and that their officers were chosen by themselves, is incontrovertibly evident, as well from Scripture, as from the authentic monuments of antiquity. The epistles of St. Cyprian, to go no farther, are as full in proof of this point, as if they had been written on purpose to establish it. The transfer of power, first from the people to their ministers, and afterwards from them to the bishop of Rome, was a gradual work, not fully accomplished till many centuries had elapsed from the Christian era. Until the conversion of Constantine, the Christian church was an *imperium in imperio*, a spiritual republic, subsisting in the midst of the Roman empire, on which it was completely independent; and its most momentous affairs were directed by popular suffrage. Nor did it in this state either excite the jealousy, or endanger the repose, of the civil magistrate; since the distinction betwixt the concerns of this world and those of another, so ably illustrated by Locke, taught the Christians of that time to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that

are God's. Instructed to yield obedience to princes for conscience' sake, they were not the less orderly or submissive, because they declined their interference in the suppression of error, or the punishment of ecclesiastical delinquency. If there be that inseparable connexion between political disaffection and the exercise of popular rights in religion, which this writer contends, the primitive Christians must have been in a deplorable state ; since it would have been impossible for them to quiet the just apprehensions of government, without placing a heathen emperor at the head of the church. What must we think of the knowledge of a writer who was ignorant of these facts, of the candor which suppressed them, or of the humanity which finds an occasion of aspersing his fellow Christians, in what escaped the malignity of heathen persecutors !

The Dissenters will not fail to remind the writer, that the British is a mixed, not an absolute monarchy ; that the habit of considering the people as nothing, is as repugnant to its spirit as that of making them every thing ; and that to vest the whole power in the hands of one person without check or control, is more suited to the genius of the Turkish, than the British government. And to this retort it must be confessed, the conduct of the High Church party, who have seldom scrupled to promulgate maxims utterly subversive of liberty, would lend a very colorable support. The whole topic, however, is invidious, absurd, and merely calculated to mislead ; since the construction of the Christian church is fixed by the will of its founder, the dictates of which we are not at liberty to accommodate or bend to the views of human policy. The dispute respecting ecclesiastical government, must, like every other on religion, be determined, if it ever be determined at all, by an appeal to Scripture, illustrated, perhaps, occasionally, by the approved usages of the earliest antiquity. To connect political consequences with it, and to make it the instrument of exciting popular odium, is the indication of a bad cause and of a worse heart. After the specimens our readers have already had of the author's spirit, they will not be surprised to find he is not quite satisfied with the Toleration Act, which, he complains, has been perverted from its purpose of affording relief to tender consciences, to that of *making* Dissenters. We are not acute enough to comprehend this distinction. We have always supposed it was the intention of the legislature, by that Act, to enable Protestant Dissenters to worship where they pleased, after giving proper notice to the magistrate ; how their availing themselves of this liberty can be construed into an abuse of the Act, we are at a loss to conceive. This writer would tolerate Dissenters, but not allow them to propagate their sentiments ; that is, he

would permit them that liberty of thinking which none can restrain, but not of speaking and acting, which are alone subject to the operation of law.

It is quite of a piece with the narrow prejudices of such a man, to complain of it as an intolerable hardship that a minister of the establishment is sometimes in danger, through the undistinguishing spirit of hospitality, of being invited to sit down with religionists of different descriptions; and he avows his manly resolution of going without his dinner, rather than expose himself to such an indignity. It is certainly a most lamentable thing to reflect, that a regular clergyman may possibly lose caste, by mixing, at the hospitable board, with some of those, who will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. When Burke was informed that Mr. Godwin held gratitude to be a crime, he replied, 'I will take care not to be accessory to his committing that crime.' We hope the lovers of hospitality will take the hint, and never insult the author of 'Zeal without Innovation' by exposing him to the touch of the ceremonially unclean.

Although we have already trespassed on the patience of our readers, we cannot dismiss this part of the subject without craving their indulgence a little longer. We are much concerned to witness the spirit of intolerance that pervades many recent publications. If the uniform course of experience can prove any thing, it is, that the extension of any particular frame of church government will of itself contribute little to the interests of vital Christianity. Suppose every inhabitant of the kingdom were to return to the bosom of the establishment tomorrow, what real accession would be gained to the kingdom of Christ? Is there any magic in the change of a name, which can convert careless, profane irreligious dissenters into devout and pious churchmen? The virtuous part of them do honor to the Christian profession in the situation they occupy at present; and for the vicious, they could only infect and disgrace the community with which they proposed to associate. What means this incessant struggle to raise one party on the ruins of another, this assumption of infallibility, and the clamorous demand for the interposition of the legislature, which we so often witness? If the writers to whom we allude will honestly tell us they are apprehensive of their 'craft' being in danger, we will give them credit for sincerity; but to attempt to cover their bigotry under the mask of piety, is too gross a deception. Were the measures adopted for which these men are so violent, they would scarcely prove more injurious to religion than to the interests of the Established Church; to which the accession of numbers would be no compensation for the loss of that activity and spirit, which are kept alive by the neighborhood of rival sects.

She would suffer rapid encroachments from infidelity, and the indolence and secularity too incident to opulent establishments would hasten her downfall. Amidst the increasing degeneracy of the clergy, which must be the inevitable effect of destroying the necessity of vigilance and exertion, the people that now crowd the conventicle, would not repair to the church; they would be scattered and dissipated, like water no longer confined within its banks. In a very short time, we have not the smallest doubt, the attendance at church would be much less than it is now. A religion, which by leaving no choice can produce no attachment, a religion invested with the stern rigor of law, and associated in the public mind, and in public practice, with prisons and pillories and gibbets, would be a noble match, to be sure, for the subtle spirit of impiety and the enormous and increasing corruption of the times. It is amusing to reflect what ample elbow-room the worthy rector would possess; how freely he might expatiate in his wide domain, and how much the effect of his denunciations against schism would be heightened by echoing through so large a void.

Hic vasto rex *Æolus* antro
Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
Imperio premit.

The Gallican church, no doubt, looked upon it as a signal triumph, when she prevailed on Louis the Fourteenth to repeal the Edict of Nantes, and to suppress the Protestant religion. But what was the consequence? Where shall we look after this period, for her Fenelons and her Pascals, where for the distinguished monuments of piety and learning which were the glory of her better days? As for piety, she perceived she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of Christian holiness surrounding her; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute, or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious as she pleased; and amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains and retired to rest. The accession of numbers she gained by suppressing her opponents, was like the small extension of length a body acquires by death; the feeble remains of life were extinguished, and she lay a putrid corpse, a public nuisance, filling the air with pestilential exhalations. Such, there is every reason to believe, would be the effect of similar measures in England. That union among Christians, which it is so desirable to recover, must, we are persuaded, be the result of something more heavenly and divine, than legal restraints, or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by trou-

bling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety among all sects and parties will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably, to turn their chief attention to points on which they agree, and, in consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering his mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassable boundary, or from condemning the most innocent and laudable usages for fear of symbolizing with another class of Christians,—an odious spirit, with which the writer under consideration is strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities, would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members, which would urge us to ask with astonishment and regret, Why cannot we be one? What is it that obstructs our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute, by drawing the attention of all parties to those fundamental and catholic principles, in which they concur.

To this we may add, that a more perfect subjection to the authority of the great Head of the Church would restrain men from inventing new terms of communion, from lording it over conscience, or from exacting a scrupulous compliance with things which the word of God has left indifferent. That sense of imperfection we ought ever to cherish, would incline us to be looking up for superior light, and make us think it not improbable that, in the long night which has befallen us, we have all more or less mistaken our way, and have much to learn and much to correct. The very idea of identifying a particular party with the church would be exploded, the foolish clamor about schism hushed; and no one, however mean and inconsiderable, be expected to surrender his conscience to the claims of ecclesiastical dominion. The New Testament is surely not so obscure a book, that, were its contents to fall into the hands of a hundred serious impartial men,

it would produce such opposite conclusions as must necessarily issue in their forming two or more separate communions. It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief points about which real Christians are divided, are points on which that volume is silent ; mere human fabrications, which the presumption of men has attached to the Christian system. A larger communication of the Spirit of truth would insensibly lead Christians into a similar train of thinking ; and being more under the guidance of that infallible teacher, they would gradually tend to the same point, and settle in the same conclusions. Without such an influence as this, the coalescing into one communion would probably be productive of much mischief ; it certainly would do no sort of good, since it would be the mere result of intolerance and pride, acting upon indolence and fear.

During the present disjointed state of things, then, nothing remains, but for every one to whom the care of any part of the church of Christ is intrusted, to exert himself to the utmost in the promotion of vital religion, in cementing the friendship of the good, and repressing, with a firm and steady hand, the heats and eruptions of party spirit. He will find sufficient employment for his time and his talents, in inculcating the great truths of the gospel, and endeavoring to 'form Christ' in his hearers, without blowing the flames of contention, or widening that breach which is already the disgrace and calamity of the Christian name. Were our efforts uniformly to take this direction, there would be an *identity* in the impression made by religious instruction ; the distortion of party features would gradually disappear, and Christians would every where approach toward that ideal beauty spoken of by painters, which is combined of the finest lines and traits conspicuous in individual forms. Since they have all drank into the same spirit, it is manifest nothing is wanting, but a larger portion of that spirit, to lay the foundation of a solid, cordial union. It is to the immoderate attachment to secular interest, the love of power, and the want of reverence for truth, not to the obscurities of Revelation, we must impute the unhappy contentions among Christians—maladies, which nothing can correct, but deep and genuine piety. The true *schismatic* is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgement, as the man who, like the author before us, sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other.

Having animadverted on the illiberality of this writer toward persons of different persuasions, we now proceed to notice his representations of the state of religion, together with his treatment of

that description of the clergy with whom he has been accustomed to associate,

The cause of religion he represents as in a very declining state.

‘Some persons now living,’ he says, ‘can remember the time, when absence from church was far from being so common as it is now become. Then the more considerable heads of families were generally seen in the house of God, with their servants as well as children. This visible acknowledgment of the importance of religion had a good effect on families of inferior condition; the presence of the merchant and his household, brought the tradesman and his family; and the example of the latter, induced his journeyman and out-door servants to come to church. But this is not a description of modern habits. In many pews, once regularly filled by the entire household to which they belonged, it is now common to see only a small portion of the family, and often not an individual. Two or three of the younger branches, from the female side of the house, occasionally attend, with, perhaps, the mother, but without the father and the sons; the father, wearied with business, wants a little relaxation; and to the young men, not suspecting their want of instruction, a rural excursion offers something interesting, while the tranquil service of a church is too tame an occupation for their unexhausted spirits. Nor among the few who attend public worship are they always the same individuals that we see in the house of God. So that it does not appear to be from steady principle, and still less from the influence of parental authority, that some of the family are occasionally there. The children are left to themselves; they may go to church if they choose to do so; they incur no displeasure from the father, they excite no grief in his bosom if they stay away. There is no disreputation attaching to absence. It falls rather upon the contrary conduct; any uniform attendance on divine worship being frequently considered a mark of imbecility, or demureness.

‘To account for the thinness of our parochial congregations, some allege, that there is not a sufficient quantity of naturally attractive circumstances in the ordinary service of the church. But it is observable, that where our liturgy is used in its *grandest* form, the attendance is as far from being numerous as it is elsewhere. It might be expected, and especially in an age in which a taste for *music* so generally prevails, that in a metropolis containing near a million of inhabitants, there might be more persons drawn by the grandeur of cathedral worship, to the place where it is performed, than could well be accommodated in one church. The cathedral of London, however, presents no such scene. With a numerous attendance of ministers, the finest specimens of church music, and these performed with that effect which professional qualification gives to such compositions, the seats at St. Paul’s cathedral are seldom half filled.’ pp. 2—4.

Though we acknowledge the truth of his statement, in a great measure, we are far from drawing from it the inference he wishes to impress. Whenever places of worship are thinly attended, at least in the Established Church, we have uniformly found it to proceed from a cause very distinct from the general decay of piety; it results from the absence of that sort of instruction which naturally engages the attention and fixes the heart. In one view, we are fully aware a great alteration has taken place; an attachment to the mere forms of religion has much subsided; the superstitious reverence, formerly paid to consecrated places and a pompous ceremonial, has waxed old; so that nothing will now command a full attendance at places set apart for divine worship, but the preaching of the gospel,—or of something, at least, that may be mistaken for it. Instead of concurring with the author in considering this as evincing the low state of Christianity among us, we are disposed to look upon it in a contrary light; being fully convinced that a readiness to acquiesce in the mere forms and ceremonies of religion, to the neglect of that truth which sanctifies the church, is one of the most dangerous errors to which men can be exposed. There is something in the constitution of human nature so abhorrent from the absence of all religion, that we are inclined to believe more are ruined by embracing some counterfeit instead of the true, than by the rejection of true and false altogether. We are not sorry therefore to learn, that the music at St. Paul's is not found a sufficient substitute for 'the joyful sound,' nor a numerous show of ministers accepted by the people, in the room of 'Christ crucified set forth before them.' Let the truths which concern men's eternal salvation be faithfully taught in that noble edifice, and the complaint of slender attendance will soon cease. In the mean time, of that part of the citizens who might be expected to frequent the cathedral, some are too gay and fashionable not to prefer the music of the theatre and the opera, and some are serious Christians, whose hunger for the bread of life will not be satisfied or diverted by the symphonies of an organ, or the splendor of canonical dresses.

He who is resolved to see nothing but what grows in his own inclosure, may report that 'all is barren,' though the fields around him bloomed like the garden of Eden; and such is the strength of this writer's prejudices, that it is morally impossible for him to give a just representation of facts. In forming his estimate of the state of religion, he is resolved to look only where he knows nothing is to be seen; and absurdly complains of the want of a crop, where he is conscious the soil has never been cultivated. Effects must be looked for from their natural causes; men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, nor are the fruits of

Christianity to be expected in the absence of the gospel. Notwithstanding this writer's gloomy prognostications, we have no doubt of the kingdom of Christ making sensible advances ; and in support of this opinion, we adduce the wider extension of religious truth, the multitude of places where the gospel is preached in its purity, the general disposition to attend it, the establishment of Sunday schools, the circulation, with happy effect, of innumerable tracts, the translation of the Scriptures into foreign languages, and their more extensive communication to all nations, the formation of Missionary societies, the growing unanimity among Christians, and the prodigious increase of faithful ministers in the Established Church. We presume these facts may be allowed a degree of weight, sufficient to overbalance the thin attendance at St. Paul's. It is not a little surprising, that a writer, who professes to exhibit a correct idea of the religious state of the nation, should pay no attention to these circumstances, or content himself with alluding to them in terms expressive of chagrin and vexation. Regarding the extensive institutions, and the diffusive benefits, which the efforts of serious Christians in different connexions have produced, as a contraband article, not entitled to be mentioned in the estimate of our moral wealth, he represents us as generally sunk in spiritual sloth and poverty. We should not learn from this writer, that attempts were making for the universal propagation of Christianity, that translations of the Scriptures were going on in different languages, or that a zeal for the conversion of Pagans had occasioned a powerful reaction at home, by producing efforts hitherto unexampled toward carrying the gospel into the darkest corners of the kingdom ; we should never suspect, from reading his work, that any material alteration had taken place within the last fifty years, or that new life had been infused into the professing world, beyond what we might conjecture perhaps from certain indirect references, and dark insinuations. Without noticing these facts, he calls upon us to join in pathetic lamentations over the prostrate state of religion, upon no better ground, than the neglect of places of worship where the gospel is *not* preached, and where there is little to attract attention, beside the privilege of hearing *fine music*, and seeing *fine ministers*, for nothing. It is a consolation to us to be convinced, that the state of things is much otherwise than he represents ; that more persons are brought acquainted with the glad tidings of the gospel, and more minds penetrated with the concerns of eternity, than at any period since the Reformation.

Thus far we dispute the justice of this author's statement, and are disposed to question the truth of the inference he has drawn from some insulated facts. But this is not the only fault we have

to find with this part of his work. He has not only, in our opinion, been betrayed into erroneous conclusions, but has utterly failed in catching the distinguishing features in the aspect of the times, so that his picture bears no sort of resemblance to the original. He has painted nothing ; he has only given an account of a particular distortion or two ; so that a foreigner would no more be able, by reading his work, to form an idea of the state of religion in England, than of a countenance he had never seen, by being told its chin was too long, or its nostrils were too wide. It must be evident to every one, that the most striking characteristic of the present times, is the violent, the outrageous opposition that is made to religion by multitudes, and the general disposition in the members of the community to take a decided part. To this circumstance, the writer has never adverted. It is impossible to suppose it could escape his attention ; we must therefore impute his silence to the well-weighed dictates of prudence, which admonished him of the possibility of betraying himself into inconveniences by such a discussion ; nor need we be surprised, notwithstanding his boasted magnanimity, at his yielding to these suggestions, since his magnanimity is of that sort, which makes a man very ready to insult his brethren, but very careful not to disgust his superiors. As we are happily exempt from these scruples, we shall endeavor, in as few words as possible, to put the reader in possession of our ideas on this subject.

The leading truths of Revelation were all long retained in the church of Rome, but buried under such a mass of absurd opinions and superstitious observances, that they drew but little attention, and exerted a very inconsiderable influence in the practical application of the system. At the Reformation, they were effectually extricated and disengaged from errors with which they had been mingled, were presented in a blaze of light, and formed the basis of our national creed. As it was by pushing them to their legitimate consequences, that the reformers were enabled to achieve the conquest of Popery, they were for a while retained in their purity, and every deviation from them denounced as menacing a revolt to the enemy. The Articles of the church were a real transcript of the principles the reformers were most solicitous to inculcate ; and being supported by the mighty impulse which produced the reformation, while that remained fresh and unbroken, they constituted the real faith of the people. Afterwards they underwent an eclipse in the Protestant Church of England, as they had done in the Church of Rome, though from causes somewhat different. The low Arminianism and intolerant bigotry of *Laud* paved the way for a change, which was not a little aided and advanced by the unbounded licentiousness and profligacy

which overspread the kingdom after the Restoration ; for it must be remembered that there is an intimate connexion between the perception and relish of truth and a right disposition of mind ; that they have a reciprocal influence on each other, and that the mystery of faith can only be placed with safety in a pure conscience. When lewdness, profaneness, and indecency reigned without control, and were practised without a blush, nothing, we may be certain, could be more repugnant to the prevailing taste, than the unadulterated word of God. There arose also, at this time, a set of divines, who partly in compliance with the popular humor, partly to keep at a distance from the Puritans, and partly to gain the infidels, who then began to make their appearance, introduced a new sort of preaching, in which the doctrines of the reformation as they are usually styled, were supplanted by copious and elaborate disquisitions on points of morality. Their fame and ability emboldened their successors to improve upon their patterns, by consigning the articles of the church to a still more perfect oblivion, by losing sight still more entirely of the peculiarities of the gospel, guarding more anxiously against every sentiment or expression that could agitate or alarm, and by shortening the length, and adding as much as possible to the dryness of their moral lucubrations. From that time, the idea commonly entertained in England of a perfect sermon, was that of a discourse upon some moral topic, clear, correct, and argumentative, in the delivery of which the preacher must be free from all suspicion of being moved himself, or of intending to produce emotions in his hearers ; in a word, as remote as possible from such a method of reasoning on righteousness, temperance, and judgement, as should make a Felix tremble. This idea was very successfully realized, this singular model of pulpit eloquence carried to the utmost perfection ; so that while the bar, the parliament, and the theatre, frequently agitated and inflamed their respective auditories, the church was the only place, where the most feverish sensibility was sure of being laid to rest. This inimitable apathy in the mode of imparting religious instruction, combined with the utter neglect of whatever is most touching or alarming in the discoveries of the gospel, produced their natural effect of extinguishing devotion in the Established Church, and of leaving it to be possessed by the Dissenters ; of whom it was considered as the distinguishing badge, and from that circumstance derived an additional degree unpopularity. From these causes, the people gradually became utterly alienated from the articles of the church, eternal concerns dropped out of the mind, and what remained of religion was confined to an attention to a few forms and ceremonies. If any exception can be made to the justice of these observations, it respects the doctrines of the Trinity and the

Atonement, which were often defended with ability, though in a dry and scholastic manner, and the discussion of which served to mark the return of the principal festivals of the church ; while other points not less important, such as the corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, were either abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that the creed established by law had no sort of influence in forming the sentiments of the people, the pulpit completely vanquished the desk, piety and puritanism were confounded in one common reproach, an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed, and the English became the most irreligious people upon earth.

Such was the situation of things, when Whitefield and Wesley made their appearance ; who, whatever failings the severest criticism can discover in their character, will be hailed by posterity as the second reformers of England. Nothing was farther from the views of these excellent men, than to innovate in the established religion of their country ; their sole aim was to recall the people to the good old way, and to imprint the doctrine of the articles and homilies on the spirits of men. But this doctrine had been confined so long to a dead letter, and so completely obliterated from the mind by contrary instruction, that the attempt to revive it met with all the opposition which innovation is sure to encounter, in addition to what naturally results from the nature of the doctrine itself, which has to contend with the whole force of human corruption. The revival of the old, appeared like the introduction of a new religion ; and the hostility it excited was less sanguinary, but scarcely less virulent, than that which signalized the first publication of Christianity. The gospel of Christ, or that system of truth which was laid as the foundation of the reformation, has since made rapid advances, and in every step of its progress has sustained the most furious assault. Great Britain exhibits the singular spectacle of two parties contending, not whether Christianity shall be received or rejected, but whether it shall be allowed to retain any thing spiritual ; not whether the articles and homilies shall be repealed, but whether they shall be laid as the basis of public instruction. Infidelity being too much discredited by the atrocities in France to hope for public countenance, the enemies of religion, instead of attacking the outworks of Christianity, are obliged to content themselves with vilifying and misrepresenting its distinguishing doctrines. They are willing to retain the Christian religion, providing it continue inefficient ; and are wont to boast of their attachment to the established church, when it is manifest there is little in it they admire except its splendor and its emoluments. The clerical order, we are sorry to say,

first set the example ; and, since evangelical principles have been more widely diffused, have generally appeared in the foremost ranks of opposition. This is nothing more than might be naturally looked for. With all the respect we feel for the clergy, on account of their learning and talents, it is impossible not to know that many of them are mere men of the world, who have consequently the same objections to the gospel as others, together with some peculiar to themselves. As the very attempt of reviving doctrines which have been obliterated through their neglect implies a tacit censure of their measures, so, wherever that attempt succeeds, it diminishes the weight of their ecclesiastical character. Deserted by the people, and eclipsed in the public esteem by many much their inferiors in literary attainments, they feel indignant ; and if, as we will suppose, they sometimes suspect their being neglected has arisen from their inattention to important truths and indispensable duties, this increases their uneasiness, which, if it fails to reform, will inevitably exasperate them still more against those who are the innocent occasions of it. It is but fair to acknowledge, that in conducting the controversy they have generally kept within decent bounds, have often reasoned where others have railed, and have usually abstained from topics hackneyed by infidels and scoffers. But they cannot be vindicated from the charge, of having, by a formal opposition to the gospel, inflamed the irreligious prejudices of the age, obstructed the work they were appointed to promote, and emboldened others, who had none of their scruples or restraints, to outrage piety itself. The dragon has cast from his mouth such a flood of heresy and mischief, that Egypt, in the worst of her plagues, was not covered with more loathsome abominations. Creatures, which we did not suspect to have existed, have come forth from their retreats, some soaring into the regions of impiety on vigorous pinions, others crawling on the earth with a slow and sluggish motion, only to be tracked through the filthy slime of their impurities. We have seen writers of every order, from the Polyphemuses of the North, to the contemptible dwarfs of the Critical Review ; men of every party, infidels, churchmen, and dissenters,—a motley crew, who have not one thing in common, except their antipathy to religion,—join hands and heart on this occasion ; a deadly taint of impiety has blended them in one mass, as things, the most discordant while they are *living* substances will do perfectly well to putrefy together.

We are not at all alarmed at this extensive combination ; we doubt not of its producing the most happy effects. It has arisen from the alarm the great enemy has felt at the extension of the gospel ; and, by drawing the attention of the world more powerfully to it, will ultimately aid the cause it is intended to subvert.

The public will not long be at a loss to determine where the truth lies, when they see, in one party, a visible fear of God, a constant appeal to his oracles, a solicitude to promote the salvation of mankind ; in the other, an indecent levity, an unbridled insolence, an unblushing falsehood, a hard unfeeling pride, a readiness to adopt any principles and assume any mask that will answer their purpose, together with a manifest aim to render the Scriptures of no authority, and religion of no effect.

Having so often alluded to the 'evangelical clergy,' we shall close this division of our remarks, with exhibiting a slight outline of the doctrine by which the clergy of this class are distinguished. The term *evangelical* was first given them, simply on account of their preaching the gospel ; or, in other words, their exhibiting with clearness and precision the peculiar truths of Christianity. In every system there are some principles which serve to identify it, and in which its distinguishing essence consists. In the system of Christianity, the rules of moral duty are not entitled to be considered in this light, partly because they are not peculiar to it, and partly because they are retained by professed infidels, who avow without scruple their admiration of the morality of the gospel. We must look then elsewhere, for the distinguishing character of Christianity. It must be sought for in its doctrines,—and, (as its professed design is to conduct men to eternal happiness,) in those doctrines which relate to the way of salvation, or the method of a sinner's reconciliation with God. There are some, we are aware, who would reduce the whole faith of a Christian to a belief of the Messiahship of Christ, without reflecting that, until we have fixed some specific ideas to the term Messiah, the proposition which affirms him to be such contains no information. The most discordant apprehensions are entertained by persons who equally profess that belief ; some affirming him to be a mere man, others a being of the angelic order, and a third party, essentially partaker of the divine nature. The first of these look upon his sufferings as merely exemplary ; the last, as propitiatory and vicarious. It must be evident then, from these views being at the utmost distance from each other, that the proposition that Christ is the Messiah conveys little information, while the import of its principal term is left vague and undetermined. The Socinian and Trinitarian, notwithstanding their verbal agreement, having a different object of worship, and a different ground of confidence, must be allowed to be of different religions. It requires but a very cursory perusal of the Articles of the Established Church, to determine to which of these systems *they* lend *their* support ; or to perceive that the deity of Christ, the doctrine of atonement for sin, the guilt and apostasy of man, and the necessity of the agen-

cy of the Spirit to restore the divine image, are asserted by them in terms the most clear and unequivocal. This question stands quite independent of the Calvinistic controversy. Are the clergy, styled evangelical, to be blamed for preaching *these* doctrines? Before this can be allowed, the Articles must be cancelled by the same authority by which they were established; or it must be shewn how it consists with integrity, to gain an introduction to the church, by signifying an unfeigned assent and consent to certain articles of religion, with the intention of immediately banishing them from notice. The clamor against the clergy in question, cannot, without an utter contempt of decency, be excited by the mere fact of their being known to hold and inculcate these doctrines; but by the manner of teaching them, or the exclusive attention they are supposed to pay them to the neglect of other parts of the system. The measure of zeal they display for them, they conceive to be justified, as well by a view of the actual state of human nature, as by the express declaration of the inspired oracles. Conceiving, with the compilers of the articles, that the state of man is that of a fallen and apostate creature, they justly conclude that a mere code of morals is inadequate to his relief; that having lost the favor of God by his transgression, he requires not merely to be instructed in the rules of duty, but in the method of regaining the happiness he has forfeited; that the pardon of sin, or some compensation to divine justice for the injury he has done to the majesty of the Supreme Lawgiver, are the objects which ought, in the first place, to occupy his attention. An acquaintance with the rules of duty may be sufficient to teach an innocent creature how to secure the felicity he possesses, but can afford no relief to a guilty conscience, nor instruct the sinner how to recover the happiness he has lost. Let it be remembered, that Christianity is essentially a restorative dispensation; it bears a continual respect to a state from which man is fallen, and is a provision for repairing that ruin which the introduction of moral evil has brought upon him. Exposed to the displeasure of God and the curse of his law, he stands in need of a Redeemer; disordered in his powers, and criminally averse to his duty, he equally needs a Sanctifier. As adapted to such a situation, much of the New Testament is employed in displaying the character and unfolding the offices of both, with a view of engaging him to embrace that scheme of mercy, which the divine benignity has thought fit to exhibit in the gospel. The intention of St. John, in composing the evangelical history, coincides with the entire purpose and scope of revelation; '*These things are written,*' said he '*that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.*' Whoever considers that, upon every hypothesis ex-

cept the Socinian, Christianity is a provision of mercy for an apostate and sinful world, through a divine Mediator, will acknowledge that something more is included in the idea of preaching the gospel, than the inculcation of moral duties; and that he, who confines his attention to these, exchanges the character of a Christian pastor for that of a fashionable declaimer or a philosophical moralist. If we turn our eyes to the ministry of the Apostles, we perceive it to have consisted in ‘testifying repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;’ repentance, which is natural religion modified by the circumstances of a fallen creature, including a return to the path of duty; and faith, which is a practical compliance with the Christian dispensation, by receiving the Saviour as the way, the truth, and the life. Faith and repentance being the primary duties enjoined under the gospel, and the production of these the professed end of the inspired writers, we need not wonder that those, who are ambitious to tread in their steps, insist much, in the course of their ministry, on the topics which supply the principal motives to these duties;—the evil of sin, the extent of human corruption, together with the dignity, power, and grace of the Redeemer. Remembering that the object of repentance is God, they do not, in treating of sin, satisfy themselves with displaying its mischievous effects in society; they expatiate on its contrariety to the divine nature; they speak of it chiefly as an affront offered to the authority of the Supreme Ruler; and represent no repentance as genuine, which springs not from godly sorrow, or a concern for having displeased God. In this part of their office, they make use of the moral law, which requires the devotion of the whole heart and unfailing obedience, as the sword of the Spirit, to pierce the conscience, and to convince men *that by the deeds of it no flesh living can be justified, but that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God.* The uniform course of experience serves to convince them, that, till a deep impression of this truth be made on the heart, the character of the Saviour, and the promise of pardon through his blood, will produce no gratitude, and excite no interest. In inculcating faith in Christ, they cannot satisfy themselves with merely exhibiting the evidences of Christianity; a mere assent to which upon historical grounds, undeniably fails, in innumerable instances, of producing those effects which are uniformly ascribed to that principle in the New Testament,—neither overcoming the world, nor purifying the heart, nor inducing newness of life. They are of opinion, that the external evidences of the Christian religion are chiefly of importance, on account of their tendency to fix the attention on Christ, the principal object exhibited in that dispensation; and the faith on which the Scriptures lay

so much stress, and connect with such ineffable benefits, they conceive essentially to involve a personal reliance on Christ for salvation, accompanied with a cordial submission to his authority. Attempting to produce this Scriptural faith, in a dependence upon the divine blessing (without which the best means will be unsuccessful,) they dwell much on the dignity of his character as the Son of God, the admirable constitution of his person as *Immanuel*, *God with us*, the efficacy of his atonement, and the gracious tenor of his invitations, together with the agency of that Spirit which is intrusted to him as the Mediator, to be imparted to the members of his mystical body. In their view, to preach the gospel is to preach Christ; they perceive the New Testament to be full of him, and while they imbibe that spirit with which it is replete, they feel a sacred ambition to diffuse ‘the savor of his name in every place.’

Let it not be inferred from hence, that they are inattentive to the interests of practical religion, or that their ministry is merely occupied in explaining and enforcing a doctrinal system. None lay more stress on the duties of a holy life, or urge with more constancy the necessity of their hearers shewing their faith by their works; and they are incessantly affirming with St. James, that the former without the latter is dead, being alone. Though in common with the inspired writers they ascribe their transition, from a state of death to a state of justification, solely to faith in Christ previous to good works actually performed, yet they equally insist upon a performance of those works as the evidence of justifying faith; and, supposing life to be spared, as the indispensable condition of final happiness. The law, not altered in its requirements, (for what was once duty they conceive to be duty still)—but attempered in its sanctions to the circumstances of a fallen creature, they exhibit as the perpetual standard of rectitude, as the sceptre of majesty by which the Saviour rules his disciples. They conceive it to demand the same things, though not with the same rigor, under the gospel dispensation as before; the matter of duty they look upon as unalterable, and the only difference to be this, that whereas under the covenant of works the condition of life was sinless obedience, under the new covenant, an obedience sincere and affectionate, though imperfect, is accepted for the sake of the Redeemer. At the same time, they do not cease to maintain, that the faith which they hold to be justifying comprehends in it the seminal principle of every virtue, that if genuine, it will not fail to be fruitful, and that a Christian has it in his power to show his faith ‘*by his works*,’ and by no other means. Under a full conviction of the fallen state of man, together with his moral incapacity to do what is pleasing to God, they copiously in-

sist on the agency of the Spirit, and affectionately urge their hearers to implore his gracious assistance. From *no class* of men will you hear more solemn warnings against sin, more earnest calls to repentance, or more full and distinct delineations of the duties resulting from every relation in life, accompanied with a peculiar advantage of drawing, from the mysteries of the gospel, the strongest motives to strengthen the abhorrence of the one, and enforce the practice of the other. In their hands, morality loses nothing but the pagan air with which it is too often infested; the morality which they enjoin is of heavenly origin, the pure emanation of truth and love, sprinkled with atoning blood, and baptized into an element of Christian sanctity. That they are not indifferent to the interests of virtue, is sufficiently apparent, from the warm approbation they uniformly express of the excellent work of Mr. Wilberforce, which is not more conspicuous for the orthodoxy of its tenets, than for the purity and energy of its moral instruction. If we look at the effects produced from the ministry of these men, they are such as might be expected to result from a faithful exhibition of the truth of God. Wherever they labor, careless sinners are awakened, profligate transgressors are reclaimed, the mere form of religion is succeeded by the power, and fruits of genuine piety appear in the holy and exemplary lives of their adherents. A visible reformation in society at large, and in many instances unequivocal proofs of solid conversion, attest the purity of their doctrines, and the utility of their labors; effects, which we challenge their enemies to produce where a different sort of teaching prevails.

The controversy between them and their opponents, to say the truth, turns on a point of the greatest magnitude; the question at issue respects the choice of a supreme end, and whether we will take 'the Lord to be our God.' Their opponents are for confining religion to an acknowledgment of the being of a God, and the truth of the Christian revelation, accompanied with some external rites of devotion, while the world is allowed the exclusive dominion of the heart; *they* are for carrying into effect the apostolic commission, by summoning men to repentance; and engaging them to an entire surrender of themselves to the service of God through a Mediator. In the system of human life, their opponents assign to devotion a very narrow and limited agency; *they* contend for its having the supreme control. The former expect nothing from religion, but the restraint of outward enormities by the fear of future punishment; in the views of the latter, it is productive of positive excellence, a perennial spring of peace, purity, and joy. Instead of regarding it as a matter of occasional reference, they consider it as a principle of constant operation. While

their opponents always overlook and frequently deny the specific difference between the church and the world ; in *their* views, the Christian is a pilgrim and stranger in the earth, one whose heart is in heaven, and who is supremely engaged in the pursuit of eternal realities. Their fiercest opposers, it is true, give to Jesus Christ the title of the Saviour of the world ; but it requires very little attention to perceive, that their hope of future happiness is placed on the supposed preponderancy of the virtues over the vices, and the claims which they thence conceive to result on the *justice* of God ; while the opposite party consider themselves as mere pensioners on *mercy*, flee for refuge to the cross, and ascribe their hopes of salvation entirely to the grace of the Redeemer.

For our parts, supposing the being and perfections of God once ascertained, we can conceive of no point at which we can be invited to stop, short of that serious piety and habitual devotion which the evangelical clergy enforce. To live without religion, to be devoid of habitual devotion, is natural and necessary in him who disbelieves the existence of its object ; but upon what principles he can justify his conduct, who professes to believe in a Deity, without aiming to please him in all things, without placing his happiness in his favor, we are utterly at a loss to comprehend.

We cannot dismiss this part of the subject, without remarking the exemplary moderation of the clergy of this class on those intricate points which unhappily divide the Christian church ; the questions, we mean, that relate to predestination and free will, on which, equally remote from Pelagian heresy and Antinomian licentiousness, they freely tolerate and indulge a diversity of opinion, embracing Calvinists and Arminians with little distinction, provided the Calvinism of the former be practical and moderate, and the Arminianism of the latter evangelical and devout. The greater part of them lean, we believe, to the doctrine of general redemption, and love to represent the gospel as bearing a friendly aspect toward the eternal happiness of all to whom it is addressed ; but they are much less anxious to establish a polemical accuracy, than to 'win souls to Christ.'

The opposition they encounter from various quarters, will not surprise those who reflect, that they are not of the world, that the world loves only its own, and naturally feels a dislike to such as testify that its works are evil. The Christianity of the greater part of the community is merely nominal ; and it necessarily follows, that, wherever the truths of religion are faithfully exhibited and practically exemplified, they will be sure to meet with the same friends and the same enemies as at the first promulgation ; they will be still exposed to assault from the prejudices of unrenewed

minds, they will be upheld by the same almighty power, and will continue to insinuate themselves into the hearts of the simple and sincere with the same irresistible force.

We hope our readers will excuse the length to which we have extended our delineation of the principles of the clergy styled 'evangelical,' reflecting how grossly they have been misrepresented, and that, until the subject is placed fairly and fully in view, it is impossible to form an equitable judgement of the treatment they have met with from the writer under consideration.

The first charge he adduces against the evangelical clergy, is that of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, according to Mr. Locke, is that state of mind, which disposes a person to give a stronger assent to a religious proposition than the evidence will justify. According to the more common and popular notion, it implies a pretence to supernatural communications, on which is founded a belief in certain doctrines and the performance of certain actions, which the Scriptures have not authorized or revealed—a dangerous delusion, as it tends to disannul the standard of religion; and, by the extravagancies and follies it produces, to bring piety into disgrace. We hold enthusiasm in as much abhorrence as our author does; but we ask, what is the proportion of the evangelical clergy, who are guilty of it; and for *every* individual among them, to whom it attaches, we will engage to produce *ten* among their opponents who are deficient in the essential branches of *morality*. Yet we should esteem it extreme illiberality in a writer to brand the clergy in general with immorality. There may be some few, among the many hundreds whom the author has undertaken to describe, who are real enthusiasts; but where is the candor or justice of mingling this feature in the delineation of the body? We appeal to the religious public, whether they are not, on the contrary, eminently conspicuous for their close adherence 'to the law and to the testimony,' and for their care to enjoin nothing on their hearers without direct warrant from the bible. If every one is to be charged with enthusiasm, whose piety is of a more fervid complexion than the accuser is disposed to sympathize with, or can readily account for, we must indeed despair of convincing this writer of the futility of his allegation. They have the *zeal*, which, to him who makes what is most prevalent in the church his model, must look like *innovation*.

He frequently insinuates, that there is a disposition in them to symbolize with the Dissenters, though he had allowed, at the very outset of his work, that they most strictly conform to the prescribed ritual, have no scruples against canonical obedience, and are most firmly attached to the ecclesiastical constitution. Speaking of the Established Church, he says,

‘They, (the evangelical clergy) approve, they admire the Church in which they serve. They rejoice in being ministers of such a church. Instead of being indifferent to its continuance, their devoutest wish is, that it may stand firm on its basis. They consider it as the greatest of blessings to their country. They observe, with no little anxiety, separatism gaining ground upon it. And this, not from an invidious principle, but because hereby an alienation *in perpetuity* is produced in many minds, from a constitution, which they consider as best providing for the universal conveyance, and permanent publication of Christian truth. Its continuance they likewise consider, as the surest pledge of religious liberty, to all who wish for that blessing. And in this view, they pity the short-sightedness of those religious persons, who forward any measures, which make against the stability of the national church. They view them as men undermining the strongest bulwark of *their own* security and comfort; and conceive, that Protestant sects of every name, however they might prefer their own modes of religion, would devoutly pray for the support and prosperity of the Church of England, as it now stands—“*sua si bona norint.*” In short, the ecclesiastical establishment of this country is, in their views, what “the ark of God” was in the estimation of the pious Israelite; and, “their hearts tremble” more for that, than for any thing else, the stability of which may seem to be endangered in these eventful times. They would consider its fall, as one of the heaviest judgements that could befall the nation.’ pp. 128, 129.

Any such approach to the Dissenters, as is inconsistent with their professional engagements, is incompatible with the truth of this testimony. But let us go on to notice another imputation.

‘I am constrained,’ says the author, ‘to admit that there is a great deal of truth in what is often alleged by their opponents, namely, that under their preaching there has arisen an unfavorable opinion of the body of the clergy. To excite a hatred of what is evil, is, undoubtedly, one purpose of Christian instruction. But while the preacher is attempting this, he must take care that he do not call forth the malignant passions. This he is almost sure to do, if he point out a certain set of men, as persons to whom his reprehensions particularly apply. The hearers, too generally apt to forget themselves, are drawn still further from the consideration of their own faults, when they can find a defined class of men, on whom they can fasten the guilt of any alleged error; on them they will discharge their gall, and mistake their rancor for *righteousness.*’ pp. 154, 155, Sec. Edit.

Two questions arise on this point; first, how far an unfavorable opinion of the body of the clergy is just; and secondly, what sort of influence the evangelical party have had in producing it. ‘The clergy as a body,’ the author complains, ‘are considered

by them and their adherents, as men who do not preach the gospel.' If we understand him, he means to assert that the clergy as a body *do* preach the gospel; for we cannot suspect him of being so ridiculous, as to complain of their being considered in their just and true light. Here we have the very singular spectacle of gospel ministers exclaiming with bitterness against some of their brethren for preaching the doctrines of the new birth, justification by faith, the internal operations of the Spirit, and whatever else characterized the faith of the Reformers; which we have the satisfaction of learning, from this most liberal writer, are no parts of the gospel. Or, if he demur in assenting to such a proposition, it is incumbent on him to explain what are the *doctrines distinct* from those we have mentioned, the inculcation of which has excited the opposition of the clergy. We in our great simplicity supposed that the ministers styled evangelical had been opposed for insisting on points intimately related to the gospel; but we are now taught from high authority, that the controversy is entirely of another kind, and relates to subjects with respect to which the preachers of the gospel may indifferently arrange themselves on either side. We are under great obligations to our author for clearing up this perplexing affair, and so satisfactorily showing both parties they were fighting in the dark. Poor George Whitefield! how much to be pitied, who exhausted himself with incredible labors, and endured a storm of persecution, in communicating religious instruction to people, who were already furnished with more than ten thousand preachers of the gospel! To be serious, however, on a subject which, if there be one in the world, demands seriousness,—it is an incontrovertible fact, that the doctrines of the Reformation are no longer heard in the greater part of the established pulpits, and that there has been a general departure from the truths of the gospel, which are exhibited in the ministry of a small though increasing minority of the clergy. The author *knows* this to be a fact, although he has the meanness to express himself in a manner that would imply his being of a contrary opinion. We wish him all the consolation he can derive from this trait of godly simplicity; as well as from his reflection on the effect which his flattery is likely to produce, in awakening the vigilance and improving the character of his newly-discovered race of Gospel ministers.—With respect to the degree in which an unfavorable opinion of the clergy is to be ascribed to the representations of the evangelical party, we have to remark, that they possess too much attachment to their order to delight in depreciating it; and that they are under no temptation to attempt it with a view to secure the preference of their hearers, who, supposing them to have derived benefit from their labors, will be suf-

ficiently aware of the difference between light and darkness, between famine and plenty. Were they to insinuate, with this author, that all their clerical brethren are actually engaged in the same cause and are promoting the same object with themselves, they would at once be charged with a violation of truth, and be considered as insulting the common sense of the public.

The author is extremely offended at Dr. Haweis, on account of the following passage in his 'History of the Church of Christ.' "Different itinerant societies have been established in order to send instruction to the poor, in the villages where the gospel is not preached. Probably not less than five hundred places of divine worship have been opened within the last three years." Dr. Haweis, in making this representation, undoubtedly conceived himself to be stating a simple fact, without suspecting any lover of the gospel would call it in question. The author's comment upon it is curious enough. 'It would be scarcely credible,' he says, 'were not the time and place marked with sufficient precision, that a clergyman, beneficed in the Church of England, was describing, in the foregoing passage, something which had lately been taking place in this country!' It is surely very credible that there are five hundred places in England where the gospel is not preached; the incredible part of the business, then, consists in a 'beneficed clergyman' daring to assert it, who, according to the author, is a sort of personage who is bound never to utter a truth that will offend the delicate ears of the Clergy, especially on so trivial an occasion as that of describing the state of religion in England. What magnanimity of spirit, and how far is this author from the suspicion of being a man-pleaser!

After acknowledging that the ministers he is characterizing have been *unjustly* charged with infringing on canonical regularity, he adds,

'Would it were as easy to defend them *universally** against those who accuse them of vanity, of courting popularity, of effrontery, of coarseness, of the want of that affectionate spirit which should breathe through all the ministrations of a Christian teacher, of their commonly appearing before a congregation with an objurgatory aspect, as if their minds were always brooding over some matter of accusation against their charge, instead of their feeling toward them as a father does toward his children.' p. 157.

The reader has in this passage a tolerable specimen of the 'vanity' and 'effrontery' of this writer, as well as of that 'objurgatory aspect' he has thought fit to assume toward his brethren, not without strong suspicion of assuming it from a desire to 'court

* The word *universally*, marked in italics, was inserted *after* the first edition.

popularity.' It would be a mere waste of words to attempt to reply to such an accusation, which merits attention on no other account than its exhibiting a true picture of his mind.

'As for the matter,' he proceeds to observe, 'of which the sermons delivered by some of them are composed, it is contemptible in the extreme. Though truths of great importance are brought forward, yet, as if those who delivered them were born to ruin the cause in which they are engaged, they are presented to the auditory, associated with such meanness, imbecility, or absurdity, as to afford a complete triumph to those who are adverse to their propagation. We are disgusted by the violation of all the rules, which the common sense of mankind teaches them to expect the observance of, on the occasion. It is true indeed, that something is heard about Christ, about faith and repentance, about sin and grace; but in vain we look for argument, or persuasion, or suavity, or reverential demeanor; qualities which ought never to be absent, where it is of the utmost importance, that the judgement be convinced, and the affections gained.' p. 158.

Unfair and illiberal in the extreme, as this representation is, it contains an important concession,—that the lowest preachers among them have the wisdom to make a right selection of topics, and to bring forward truths of great importance; a circumstance sufficient of itself to give them an infinite superiority over the 'apes of Epictetus.*' A great diversity of talents must be expected to be found amongst them; but it has not been our lot to hear of any, whose labors a good man would think it right to treat with indiscriminate contempt. As they are called, for the most part, to address the middle and lower classes of society, their language is plain and simple; speaking in the presence of God, their address is solemn; and, as becomes 'the ambassadors of Christ,' their appeals to the conscience are close and cogent. Few, if any, among them, aspire to the praise of consummate orators; a character which we despair of ever seeing associated, in high perfection, with that of a Christian teacher. The minister of the gospel is called to declare the testimony of God, which is always weakened by a profuse employment of the ornaments of secular eloquence. Those exquisite paintings and nice touches of art, in which the sermons of the French preachers excel so much, excite a kind of attention, and produce a species of pleasure, not in perfect accordance with devotional feeling. The imagination is too much excited and employed, not to interfere with the more awful functions of conscience; the hearer is absorbed in admiration, and the exercise which ought to be an instrument of conviction be-

* Horsley.

comes a feast of taste. In the hand of a Massillon, the subject of death itself is blended with so many associations of the most delicate kind, and calls up so many sentiments of natural tenderness, as to become a source of theatrical amusement, rather than of religious sensibility. Without being insensible to the charms of eloquence, it is our decided opinion that a sermon of Mr. Gisborne's is more calculated to 'convert a sinner from the error of his way,' than one of Massillon's. It is a strong objection to a studied attempt at oratory in the pulpit, that it usually induces a neglect of the peculiar doctrines of Christian verity, where the preacher feels himself restrained, and is under the necessity of explaining texts, of obviating objections, and elucidating difficulties, which limits the excursions of imagination, and confines it within narrow bounds. He is therefore eager to escape from these fetters, and, instead of '*reasoning out of the Scriptures,*' expatiates in the flowery fields of declamation. It would be strange, however, if the evangelical clergy did not excel their contemporaries in the art of preaching, to which they devote so much more of their attention. While others are accustomed to describe it under the very appropriate phrase of 'doing duty,' it is their business and their delight. They engage in it under many advantages. Possessed of the same education with their brethren, they usually speak to crowded auditories; the truths they deliver command attention, and they are accustomed to ascend the pulpit under an awful sense of the weight and importance of their charge. Under such circumstances, it is next to impossible for them not to become powerful and impressive. Were it not indelicate to mention names, we could easily confirm our observations by numerous living examples. Suffice it to say, that perhaps no denomination of Christians ever produced so many excellent preachers; and that it is entirely owing to them, that the ordinance of preaching has not fallen, in the Established Church, into utter contempt.

With respect to the remarks the author makes on the 'hypochondriacal cast of preaching heard among them,' of their 'holding their hearers by details of conflicts and experiences,' and of their '*prosings* on the hidings of God's face,'* we need not detain our readers. To good men it will be matter of serious regret, to find a writer, from whom different things were to be expected, treat the concerns of the spiritual warfare in so light and ludicrous a manner; while the irreligious will heartily join in the laugh. It should be remembered that he is performing quarantine, purging himself from the suspicion of *Methodism*, and that nothing can answer this purpose so well as a spice of profaneness.

* In the second edition, the author has changed the term '*prosings*,' into '*discoursings*.'

After expressing his contempt of the evangelical clergy as *preachers*, he proceeds to characterize them in the following manner as *writers*.

‘ Here,’ says he, ‘ I can with great truth affirm, that many included in that description of clergymen now under consideration, are sorely grieved, by much of what comes out as the produce of authorship on their side. And well they may be ; to see, as is frequently the case, the blessed truths of the gospel degraded, by being associated with newspaper bombast, with impudence, with invective, with dotage, with drivelling cant, with buffoonery, and scurrility ! Who can read these despicable publications, without thinking contemptuously of all who abet them ? But let not every one, in whom an occasional coincidence of opinion may be recognized, be included in this number. For it is a certain truth, that the writings of avowed infidels are not more offensive to several of the clergy in question, than are some of the publications here alluded to. Let them not therefore be judged of, by that which they condemn ; by productions, which they consider as an abuse of the liberty of the press, and a disgrace to the cause which their authors profess to serve.’ p. 179.

Whoever remembers that the most learned interpreter of prophecy now living ranks with the evangelical clergy, whoever recalls to his recollection the names of Scott, Robinson, Gisborne, and a multitude of others of the same description, will not easily be induced to form a contemptuous opinion of their literary talents, or to suspect them of being a whit behind the rest of the clergy in mental cultivation or intellectual vigor. In a subsequent edition, the author has explained his meaning, by restricting the censure to all who have ranged themselves *on the side* of the clergy under consideration. But as far as the most explicit avowal of the same tenets can indicate any thing, have not each of the respectable persons before mentioned ranged themselves on their side ? Or if he will insist upon limiting the phrase to such as have defended them in controversy, what will he say of Overton, whose work, for a luminous statement of facts, an accurate arrangement of multifarious articles, and a close deduction of proofs, would do honor to the first polemic of the age ? In affecting a contempt of this most able writer, he has contradicted himself, having, in another part of this work, borne a reluctant testimony to his talents. He closes his animadversions on the clergy usually styled evangelical, with the following important concessions.

‘ We are ready to own, though there have been a few instances to the contrary, that the moral conduct of the men in question is consistent with their calling ; and that though the faults above detailed

are found among them, yet that as a body they are more than free from immoralities.' p. 162.

The men to whom their accuser ascribes an assemblage of virtues so rare and so important, must unquestionably be 'the excellent of the earth,' and deserve a very different treatment from what they have received at his hands.

Before we put a final period to this article, we must beg the reader's patience to a few remarks on the general tendency of the work under examination.

For the freedom of the censure the author has assumed, he cannot plead the privilege of reproof. He has violated every law by which it is regulated. In administering reproof, we are not wont to call in a third party, least of all the party to whom the persons reproved are directly opposed. Besides, if reproof is intended to have any effect, it must be accompanied with the indications of a friendly mind; since none ever succeeded in reclaiming the person he did not appear to love. The spirit this writer displays toward the object of his censure, is decidedly hostile; no expressions of esteem, no attempt to conciliate; all is rudeness, asperity, and contempt. He tells us in his preface, 'It is difficult to find an apology for disrespectful language under any circumstances; if it can be at all excused, it is when he who utters, lets us know from whence it comes; but he who dares to use it, and yet dares not put his name to the abuse, gives us a reason to conclude that his cowardice is equal to his insolence.' (Pref. p. 4.) In violation of his own canon, he seems to have assumed a disguise for the very purpose of giving an unbridled indulgence to the insolence he condemns.

If we consider him in the light of a public Censor, he will appear to have equally neglected the proprieties of that character. He, who undertakes that office, ought, in all reason, to direct his chief attention to vice and impiety; which, as the common foes of human nature, give every one the privilege of attack. Though his subject naturally led him to it, we find little or nothing of the kind. In his eagerness to expose the aberrations of goodness, the most deadly sins and the most destructive errors are scarcely noticed. In surveying the state of morals, the eccentricities of a pious zeal, a hair-breadth deviation from ecclesiastical etiquette, a momentary feeling of tenderness towards Dissenters, are the things which excite his indignation; while the secularity, the indolence, the ambition, and dissipation, too prevalent in the church, almost escape his observation. We do not mean to assert, that it is always improper to animadvert on the errors of good men; we are convinced of the contrary. But, whenever it is attempted, it

ought to be accompanied with such expressions of tenderness and esteem, as shall mark our sense of their superiority to persons of an opposite description. In the moral delineations with which the New Testament abounds, when the imperfections of Christians are faithfully reprehended, we are never tempted to lose sight of the infinite disparity betwixt the friends and the enemies of the gospel. Our reverence for good men is not impaired by contemplating their infirmities; while those who are strangers to vital religion, with whatever amiable qualities they may be invested, appear objects of pity. The impression made by the present performance is just the reverse. The character of the unquestionably good is placed in so invidious a light on the one hand, and the bad qualities of their opponents so artfully disguised and extenuated on the other, that the reader feels himself at a loss which to prefer. Its obvious tendency is to obliterate every distinctive mark and characteristic, by which genuine religion is ascertained.'

The writer of this work cannot have intended the reformation of the party on which he has animadverted; for, independently of his having, by the rudeness of his attack, forfeited every claim to their esteem, he has so conducted it that there is not one in fifty guilty of the faults he has laid to their charge. Instead of being induced to alter their conduct, they can only feel for him those sentiments which unfounded calumny is apt to inspire. The very persons to whom his censures apply, will be more likely to feel their resentment rise at the bitterness and rancor which accompanies them, than to profit by his admonitions.

As we are fully convinced that the controversy agitated between the evangelical party and their opponents, involves the essential interests of the gospel, and whatever renders Christianity worth contending for, we cannot but look with jealousy on the person who offers himself as an umpire; especially when we perceive a leaning towards the party which we consider in the wrong. This partiality may be traced almost through every page of the present work. Were we to look only to speculative points, we might be tempted to think otherwise. It is not, however, in the cool argumentative parts of a work, that the bias of an author is so much to be perceived, as in the declamatory parts when he gives a freer scope to his feelings. It is in the choice of the epithets applied to the respective parties, in the expression of contemptuous or respectful feeling, in the solicitude apparent to please the one, combined with his carelessness of offending the other, that he betrays the state of his heart. Judged by this criterion, this author must be pronounced an *enemy* to the evangelical party. We hope this unnatural alienation from the servants of Christ will not prove contagious, or it will soon completely

overthrow that reformation which the Established Church has experienced within the last fifty years.

When Samson was brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for the Philistines, it was by the Philistines themselves ; had it been done by an Israelite, it would have betrayed a blindness much more deplorable than that of Samson. Great as were the irregularities and disorders which deformed the church at Corinth, and severely as they were reprehended, it is easy to conceive, but impossible to express the indignation Paul would have felt, had a Christian held up those disorders to the view and the derision of the heathen world. It is well known that the conduct of Luther, of Carlostadt, and of many other reformers, furnished matter of merited censure, and even of plausible invective ; but he who had employed himself in emblazoning and magnifying their faults, would have been deemed a foe to the Reformation. Aware that it will be replied to this, the cases are different, and neither the truth of Christianity nor the doctrines of the Reformation are involved in the issue of the present controversy, we answer, without hesitation, that the controversy now on foot *does* involve nearly all that renders it important for Christianity to be true, and most precisely the doctrines of the Reformation, to which the Papists are not more inimical, (in some points they are less so) than the opponents of the evangelical clergy. It is the old enmity to the gospel, under a new form ; an enmity as deadly and inveterate, as that which animated the breast of Porphyry or of Julian.

The impression of character on the public mind, is closely connected with that of principles ; so that, in the mixed questions more especially which regard religion and morals, it is in vain to expect men will condescend to be instructed by those whom they are taught to despise. Let it be generally supposed that the patrons of orthodox piety are weak, ignorant, and enthusiastic, despicable as a body, with the exception of a few individuals ; after being inured to such representations from their enemies, let the public be told this by one who was formerly their friend and associate,—and is it possible to conceive a circumstance more calculated to obstruct the efficacy of their principles ? Will the prejudices of an irreligious world against the gospel be mitigated, by being inspired with contempt for its abettors ? Will it be won to the love of piety, by being schooled in the scorn and derision of its most serious professors ?

We can readily suppose, that, stung with the reproaches cast upon his party, he is weary of bearing the cross ; if this be the case, let him at once renounce his principles, and not attempt, by mean concessions and a temporizing policy, to form an impracticable coalition betwixt the world and the church. We apprehend

the ground he has taken is untenable, and that he will be likely to please neither party. By the friends of the gospel he will be in danger of being shunned as an 'accuser of the brethren;' while his new associates regard him with the contempt due to a sycophant.

It must give the enlightened friends of religion concern, to witness a spirit gaining ground amongst us, which, to speak of it in the most favorable terms, is calculated to sow the seeds of discord. The vivid attention to moral discrimination, the vigilance which seizes on what is deemed reprehensible, is unhappily turned to the supposed failings of good men, much to the satisfaction, no doubt, of an ungodly world. The practice of caricaturing the most illustrious men has grown fashionable among us. With grief and indignation we lately witnessed an attempt of this kind on the character of Mr. Whitefield, made, if our information be correct, by the present author; in which every shade of imperfection, which tradition can supply, or ingenuity surmise, is industriously brought forward for the purpose of sinking him in public estimation. Did it accomplish the object intended by it? It certainly did not. While the prejudice entertained against Whitefield, by the enemies of religion, was already too violent to admit of increase, its friends were perfectly astonished at the littleness of soul, and the callousness to every kind feeling, which could delight in mangling such a character. It was his misfortune to mingle freely with different denominations, to preach in unconsecrated places, and convert souls at uncanonical hours; whether he acted right or wrong in these particulars, it is not our province to inquire. That he approved himself to his own conscience, there is not the least room to doubt. Admitting his conduct, in the instances alluded to, to have been inconsistent with his clerical engagements, let it be temperately censured; but let it not efface from our recollection the patient self-denial, the inextinguishable ardor, the incredible labors, and the unexampled success, of that extraordinary man. The most zealous votaries of the church need be under no apprehension of her being often disgraced by producing such a man as Mr. Whitefield. *Nil admirari*, is an excellent maxim, when applied, as Horace intended it, to the goods of fortune; when extended to character, nothing can be more injurious. A sensibility to the impression of great virtues, bordering on enthusiasm, accompanied with a generous oblivion of the little imperfections with which they are joined, is one of the surest prognostics of excellence.

Verum, ubi plura nitent—non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura—

The modern restorers of the piety of the Church of England were eminent for their godly simplicity and fidelity. Sincerely attached, as it became them, to the establishment of which they were ministers, their spirit was too enlarged, too ardent, too disinterested, to suffer them to become the tools of a party, or to confound the interests of Christianity with those of any external communion. From their being looked upon as innovators, as well as from the paucity of their numbers, they were called to endure a much severer trial than falls to the lot of their successors. They bore the burden and heat of the day; they labored, and others have entered into their labors. We feel, with respect to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern, at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new-modelling the party; who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet have too little firmness to endure the consequences: timid, temporizing spirits, who would refine into insipidity, polish into weakness, and, under we know not what pretences of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn, from this and other writers of a similar description, to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces; they will become 'like other men,' feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength. We should adjure them to be on their guard against the machinations of this new sect. We cannot suspect them of the meanness of submitting to be drilled by their enemies, whom they are invited to approach in the attitude of culprits, beseeching them, (in our author's phrase) to 'inquire whether there may not be some found among them of unexceptionable character!' We trust they will treat such a suggestion with ineffable contempt.

After the taste our readers have had of this writer's spirit, they will not be surprised at his entire disapprobation of Mr. Overton's work. The discordance of sentiment must be great, betwixt him who wishes to betray, and him whose aim is to defend. Mr. Overton, in behalf of his brethren, boldly appeals from their accusers, to the public; this writer crouches to those very accusers, approaches them in a supplicating tone, and, as the price of peace, offers the heads of his brethren in a charger. Overton, by a copious detail of facts, and by a series of irrefragable arguments, establishes their innocence; this writer assents to their condemnation, entreating only that execution may be respited till an inquiry is made into the degrees of delinquency. The author of *The True Churchman Ascertained* clothes himself with the light of truth; the author of *Zeal without Innovation* hides himself in the thickest gloom of equivocation.

Before we close this article, we must entreat our reader's patience while we make one observation relating to the permanence of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is possible the dignitaries of the church may be at a loss to decide whether the services of the evangelical class shall be accepted or rejected ; but we are persuaded the people will feel no difficulty, in determining whether to continue their attendance at the places from whence they are banished. Teachers of the opposite description have already lost their hold on the public mind ; and they will lose it more and more. Should the secession from the Established Church become so general, as that its services are no longer the objects of popular suffrage, it will be deprived of its firmest support. For the author of the 'Alliance' acknowledges, that the compact betwixt church and state, which he allows to be a virtual rather than a formal one, mainly rests upon the circumstance of the established religion being that of the majority ; without which it becomes incapable of rendering those services to the state, for the sake of which its privileges and emoluments were conferred. Nothing but an extreme infatuation can accelerate such an event. But if pious and orthodox men be prevented from entering into the church, or compelled to retire from it, the people will retire with them ; and the apprehension of the church being in danger, which has so often been the watchword of party, will become for once well founded.

REVIEW
OF
GISBORNE'S SERMONS
ORIGINALLY INSERTED IN THE
LONDON ECLECTIC REVIEW.

REVIEW.

SERMONS, *principally designed to illustrate and to enforce Christian Morality.* By the Rev. T. GISBORNE, A. M. 8vo. pp. 430.

WE have read these sermons with so much satisfaction, that were it in our power to aid their circulation by any testimony of our approbation, we should be almost at a loss for terms sufficiently strong and emphatic. Though the excellent author is possessed already of a large share of the public esteem, we are persuaded these discourses will make a great accession to his celebrity. Less distinguished by any predominant quality, than by an assemblage of the chief excellencies in the pulpit composition, they turn on subjects not very commonly handled, and discuss them with a copiousness, delicacy, and force, which evince the powers of a master. They are almost entirely upon moral subjects, yet equally remote from the superficiality and dryness with which these subjects are too often treated. The morality of Mr. Gisborne is arrayed in all the majesty of truth, and all the beauties of holiness. In perusing these sermons, the reader is continually reminded of real life, and beholds human nature under its most unsophisticated aspect, without ever being tempted to suppose himself in the schools of pagan philosophy. We cannot better explain the professed scope and object of the author, than by copying a few sentences from his preface.

Of late years it has been loudly asserted that, among clergymen who have showed themselves very earnest in doctrinal points, adequate regard has not been evinced to moral instruction. The charge has perhaps been urged with the greatest vehemence by persons, who have employed little trouble in examining into its truth. In many cases, it has been groundless; in many, exaggerated. In some instances there has been reason, I fear, for a degree of complaint; and in more, a colorable pretext for the imputation. I believe that some preachers, shocked on beholding examples, real or supposed, of congregations starving on mere morality substituted for

the bread of life; eager to lay broad and deep the foundations of the gospel; and ultimately apprehensive lest their own hearers should suspect them of reverting towards *legality*; have not given to morals, as fruits of faith, the station and the amplitude to which they have a scriptural claim. Anxious lest others should mistake, or lest they should themselves be deemed to mistake, the branch for the root: not satisfied with proclaiming to the branch, as they were bound habitually to proclaim, *Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee*: they have shrunk from the needful office of tracing the ramifications. They have not left morality out of their discourses. But they have kept it too much in the back ground. They noticed it shortly, generally, incidentally; in a manner which, while perhaps they were eminent as private patterns of moral duties, might not sufficiently guard an unwary hearer against a reduced estimate of practical holiness, nor exempt themselves from the suspicion of undervaluing moral obedience. Pref. pp. 7, 8.

To the truth of these remarks we cordially assent, as they point to a defect in the ministrations of some excellent men, which the judicious part of the public have long lamented, and which Mr. Gisborne, in his present work, has taught his contemporaries how to remedy. Extremes naturally lead to each other. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel had been so long neglected by the most celebrated preachers, and the pernicious consequences of that neglect, in wearing out every trace of genuine religion, had been so deeply felt, that it is not to be wondered at if the first attempts to correct the evil were accompanied with a tendency to the contrary extreme. In many situations, those who attempted to revive doctrines which had long been considered as obsolete, found themselves much in the same circumstances as missionaries, having intelligence to impart before unknown, and exposed to all the contempt and obloquy which assailed the first preachers of Christianity. While they were engaged in such an undertaking, it is not at all surprising that they confined their attention almost entirely to the doctrines peculiar to the Christian religion, with less care to inculcate and display the moral precepts which it includes in common with other systems than their intrinsic importance demanded. They were too much occupied in removing the rubbish and laying the foundations, to permit them to carry the superstructure very high. They insisted in general terms on the performance of moral duties, urged the necessity of that holiness without which 'none shall see the Lord,' and, by a forcible application of truth to the conscience, produced in many instances the most surprising, as well as the most happy effects. But still, in consequence of limiting their ministry too much to the first elements of the gospel, and dwelling chiefly on topics calculated to

alarm the careless and console the faithful, a wrong taste began to prevail among their hearers; a disrelish of moral discussions, a propensity to contemplate Christianity under one aspect alone, that of a system of relief for the guilty, instead of a continual discipline of the heart. Those wished for stimulants and cordials, whose situation required alteratives and correctives. Preachers and hearers have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the fear of being reproached as '*legal*,' deterred some good men from insisting so much on moral and practical subjects as their own good sense would have dictated. By this means the malady became more inveterate, till the inherent corruption of human nature converted the doctrine of the gospel in a greater or less degree into the leaven of antinomianism. An error, which at first appeared trivial, at length proved serious; and thus it came to pass that the fabric of sacred truth was almost universally reared in such a manner, as to deviate sensibly from the primitive model.

When we look at Christianity in the New Testament, we see a set of discoveries, promises, and precepts, adapted to influence the whole character; it presents an object of incessant solicitude, in the pursuit of which new efforts are to be exerted, and new victories accomplished, in a continued course of well doing, till we reach the heavenly mansions. There is scarce a spring in the human frame and constitution it is not calculated to touch, nor any portion of human agency which is exempted from its control. Its resources are inexhaustible; and the considerations by which it challenges attention, embrace whatever is most awful or alluring in the whole range of possible existence. Instead of being allowed to repose on his past attainments, or to flatter himself with the hope of success without the exercise of diligence and watchfulness, the Christian is commanded to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. In the *actual* exhibition of religion, the solicitude of serious minds has been made to turn too much on a particular crisis, which has been presented in a manner so insulated, that nothing in the order of means seemed instrumental to its production. In short, things have been represented in such a manner, as was too apt to produce despondency before conversion, and presumption after it.

It must be allowed, the judicious management of practical subjects, is more difficult than the discussion of doctrinal points; which may also account, in part, for the prevalence of the evil we are now speaking of. In treating a point of doctrine, the habit of belief almost supersedes the necessity of proof; the mind of the hearer is usually pre-occupied in favor of the conclusions to be established; nor is much address or ingenuity necessary to conduct him in a path in which he has long been accustomed to tread.

The materials are prepared to the preacher's hands ; a set of texts with their received interpretations stand ready for his use ; the compass of thought which is required is very limited, and this little circle has been beaten so often, that an ordinary understanding moves through it with mechanical facility. To discuss a doctrinal position to the satisfaction of a common audience, requires the smallest possible exertion of intellect. The tritest arguments are in fact the best ; the most powerful considerations to enforce assent are rendered by that very quality the most conspicuous, as the sun announces himself by his superior splendor. In delineating the duties of life, the task is very different. To render these topics interesting, it is necessary to look abroad, to contemplate the principles of human nature, and the diversified modes of human feeling and action. The preacher has not to do with a few rigid and unbending propositions ; he is to contemplate and portray a real state of things, a state which is continually changing its aspect while it preserves its essential character, and the particulars of which mock the powers of enumeration. If he does not think with great originality, he must at least think for himself ; he must use his own eyes, though he may report nothing but what has been observed before. As there lies an appeal, on these occasions, to the unbiassed good sense and observation of unlettered minds, the deficiencies of an injudicious instructor are sure to be detected. His principles will fail of interesting for want of exemplification ; or his details will be devoid of dignity, and his delineations of human life disgust by their deviation from nature and from truth.

In points of casuistry, difficulties will occur which can only be solved and disentangled by nice discrimination, combined with extensive knowledge. The general precepts, for example, of justice and humanity, may be faithfully inculcated, and earnestly insisted on, without affording a ray of useful direction to a doubting conscience. While all men acknowledge the indispensable obligation of these precepts, it is not always easy to discover what is the precise line of action they enforce. In the application of general rules to particular cases of conduct, many relations must be surveyed, opposing claims must be reconciled and adjusted, and the comparative value of different species of virtue established upon just and solid principles.

These difficulties have been evaded, rather than overcome, by the greater part of moralizing preachers ; who have contented themselves with retailing extracts from the works of their celebrated predecessors, or with throwing together a few loose and undigested thoughts on a moral duty, without order and arrangement, or the smallest effort to impress its obligation upon the conscience,

or to deduce it from its proper sources. To the total want of unction, to the cold, pagan, anti-christian cast of these compositions, joined to their extreme superficiality, must be ascribed, in a great measure, the disgust which many serious minds have contracted against the introduction of moral topics into the pulpit. Our readers will not suspect we mean to apply this censure indiscriminately, or that we are insensible to the extraordinary merits of a Barrow or of a Tillotson, who have cultivated Christian morals with so universal an applause of the English public. We admire, as much as it is possible for our readers to admire, the rich invention, the masculine sense, the exuberantly copious, yet precise and energetic diction, which distinguish the first of these writers, who by a rare felicity of genius united in himself the most distinguishing qualities of the mathematician and of the orator. We are astonished at perceiving in the same person, and in the same composition, the close logic of Aristotle, combined with the amplifying powers of Plato. The candor, the good sense, the natural arrangement, the unpremeditated graces of Tillotson, if they excite less admiration, give us almost equal pleasure. It is indeed the peculiar boast of the English nation, to have produced a set of divines, who, being equally acquainted with classical antiquity and inspired writ, and capable of joining, to the deepest results of unassisted reason, the advantages of a superior illumination, have delivered down to posterity a body of moral instruction, more pure, copious, and exact, than subsists among any other people; and had they appealed more frequently to the peculiar principles of the gospel, had they infused a more evangelical spirit into their discourses, instead of representing Christianity too much as a mere code of morals, they would have left us nothing to wish or to regret. Their decision of moral questions was for the most part unquestionably just; but they contemplated moral duties too much apart, neglecting to blend them sufficiently with the motives and principles of pure revelation, after the manner of the inspired writers; and, supposing them to believe, they forgot to inculcate, the fundamental truth—that *'by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified.'* Those internal dispositions, whence right conduct can alone flow, were too little insisted on; the agency of the Spirit was not sufficiently honored or acknowledged; and the subordination of the duties of the second, to those of the first table, not enough kept in view. The virtues they recommended and enforced, were too often considered as the native growth of the human heart, instead of being represented as *'fruits of the Spirit.'* Jesus Christ was not laid as the foundation of morality; and a very sparing use was made of the motives to its practice deduced from his promises, his example, and his sacrifice. Add to this,

that the labors of these great men were employed almost entirely in illustrating and enforcing the obligation of particular duties, while the doctrine of the cross engaged little of their attention, except as far as it was impugned by the objections of infidels, or mutilated by the sophistry of papists. From the perusal of their writings, the impression naturally results, that a belief of the evidences of revealed religion, joined to a correct deportment in social life, is adequate to all the demands of Christianity. For these reasons, much as we admire, we cannot recommend them in an unqualified manner, nor consider them as safe guides in religion.

By these remarks, we intend no offence to any class of Christians. That the celebrated authors we have mentioned, with others of a similar stamp, have refined the style, and improved the taste, of the English pulpit, while they have poured a copious stream of knowledge on the public mind, we are as ready to acknowledge as their warmest admirers; but we will not disguise our conviction, that, for the just delineation of the 'truth' as it is in Jesus,' we must look to the Baxters, the Howes, and the Ushers, of an earlier period. He who wishes to catch the flame of devotion, by listening to the words 'which are spirit and are life,' will have recourse to the writings of the latter, notwithstanding their intricacy of method, and prolixity of style.

It is with peculiar satisfaction we call the attention of our readers to a work, which unites, in a considerable degree, the excellencies of each class of divines alluded to, without their defects. The discourses are on the following subjects. Our Lord Jesus Christ the Foundation of Morality; on the Evils resulting from False Principles of Morality; on the Changes produced by the coming of Christ in the Situation of Men as to the Divine Law; Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality; on Living after the Flesh or after the Spirit; the Love of God an Inducement to strict Morality; on Brotherly Love; on the Love of Money; on the Sacrifice of Worldly Interest to Duty; on Christian Bounty; on Discontent; on Worldly Anxiety; on Christian Obedience to Civil Rulers; Christian Patriotism illustrated by the Character of Nehemiah; on quiet Diligence in our Proper Concerns; on Partiality; on Suspicion; on doing Evil to produce good; on the Superiority of Moral Conduct required of Christians. The reader will perceive it was not the author's design to make a systematic arrangement of Christian duties, and that there are many vices and virtues not comprehended within the plan of his present work. In the discussion of the subjects which he has selected, he has evinced much observation of human life, a deep insight into the true principles of morals, and intimate acquaintance with the genius of the Christian religion. He has erected his edifice

upon a solid basis ; in the choice of his materials he has carefully excluded the wood, hay, and stubble ; and admitted no ornaments but such as are fitted to grace the temple of God.

The intelligent reader will discover, in these discourses, the advantage resulting from studying morality as a science. It will yield him great satisfaction to find the writer ascending on all occasions to first principles, forming his decisions on comprehensive views, separating what is specious from what is solid, and enforcing morality by no motives which are suspicious or equivocal. He will not see vanity or ambition pressed into the service of virtue, or any approach to the adoption of that dangerous policy which proposes to expel one vice by encouraging another. He will meet with no flattering encomiums on the purity and dignity of our nature, none of those appeals to the innate goodness of the human heart, which are either utterly ineffectual, or, if they restrain from open profligacy, diffuse, at the same time, the more subtle poison of pride and self-righteousness. Mr. Gisborne never confounds the functions of morality with the offices of the Saviour, nor ascribes to human virtue, polluted and imperfect at best, any part of those transcendent effects, which the New Testament teaches us to impute to the mediation of Christ. He considers the whole compass of moral duties as branches of religion, as prescribed by the will of God, and no farther acceptable to him than as they proceed from religious motives.

The disposition in mankind to seek justification by the works of the law, has been so much flattered and encouraged by the light in which moral duties have been usually placed, that Mr. Gisborne has shown his judgement by counteracting this error at the outset. We recommend to the serious attention of our readers, with this view, the fourth sermon, on Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality. We have never seen a publication, in which that important argument is set in a more clear and convincing light.

Though Mr. Gisborne for a series of years has distinguished himself as the able opponent of the doctrine of expediency, yet on no occasion has he exerted more ability in this cause than in his present work. We recommend it to the thinking part of the public to forget for a moment that they are reading a sermon, and conceive themselves attending to the arguments of a sober and enlightened philosopher. To purify the sources of morals, and to detect the principles of a theory, which enables us to err by system and be deprived by rule, is to do good of the highest sort ; as he who diminishes the mass of human calamity by striking one from the list of diseases, is a greater benefactor to mankind than the physician who performs the greatest number of cures. It is

in this light we look upon the labors of the present author ; to whom we are more indebted than to any other individual for discrediting a doctrine, which threatens to annihilate religion, to loosen the foundation of morals, and to debase the character of the nation. We recommend to universal perusal the admirable discourse, on the Evils resulting from False Principles of Morality.

The two discourses which propose to illustrate the Character of Nehemiah, contain the most valuable instruction, adapted in particular to the use of those who occupy the higher ranks, or who possess stations of commanding influence and authority. It evinces just and enlarged views of the duties attached to elevated situations, and breathes the purest spirit of Christian benevolence. The sermon on the Love of Money displays, perhaps, the most of the powers of the orator, and demonstrates in how masterly a manner the author is capable, when he pleases, of enforcing 'the terrors of the Lord.' It contains some awful passages, in which, by a kind of repeated asseveration of the same truth, and the happy reiteration of the same words, an effect is produced resembling that of repeated claps of thunder. We shall present our readers with the following specimen.

Fourthly. Meditate on the final condition to which the lover of money is hastening. The *covetous*, the man who is under the dominion of the love of money, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. In the present life he has a foretaste of the fruits of his sin. He is restless, anxious, dissatisfied ; at one time harassed by uncertainty as to the probable result of his projects ; at another, soured by the failure of them ; at another, disappointed in the midst of success by discerning, too late, that the same exertions employed in some other line of advantage would have been more productive. But suppose him to have been, through life, as free from the effects of these sources of vexation as the most favorable picture could represent him. *He shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. He may not have been a miser ; but he was a lover of money. He may not have been an extortioner ; but he was a lover of money. He may not have been fraudulent ; but he was a lover of money. *He shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. He has had his day and his object. He has sought, and he may have accumulated, earthly possessions. By their instrumentality he may have gratified many other appetites and desires. But he did not seek first the kingdom of God : therefore he shall not obtain it. *He loved the world* ; therefore he *shall perish with the world*. He has wilfully bartered his soul for money. In vain is he now aghast at his former madness. In vain does he now detest the idol which he worshipped. The gate of salvation is closed against him. He inherits the bitterness of unavailing remorse, the horrors of eternal death. pp. 145, 146.

If we were called to specify the discourse in the present volume, that appeared to us the most ingenious and original, we should be inclined to point to the eighteenth, on Suspicion.

Having expressed our warm approbation of this performance, justice compels us to notice what appear to us its principal blemishes ; which, however, are so overbalanced by the merit of the whole, that we should scarcely deem them worthy of remark, were it not requisite to vindicate our claim to impartiality. Against the sentiments or the arrangement of these discourses, we have nothing to object : the former are almost invariably just and important, often striking and original ; the latter is natural and easy, preserving the *spirit* of method even where it may seem to neglect the forms ; equally remote from the looseness of an harangue, and the ostentation of logical exactness. With the style of this work, we cannot say that we are quite so much satisfied. Perspicuous, dignified, and correct, it yet wants something more of amenity, variety, and ease. Instead of flexibility which bends to accommodate itself to the different conceptions which occur, it preserves a sort of uniform stateliness. The art of transposition, carried, in our opinion, to excess, together with the preference of learned to plain Saxon words, give it an air of Latinity, which must necessarily render it less intelligible and acceptable to unlettered minds. It is indeed but fair to remark, that the discourses appear to have been chiefly designed for the use of the higher classes. But while we allow this apology its just weight, we are still of opinion, that the composition might have assumed a more easy and natural air, without losing any thing of its force or beauty. Addresses from the pulpit should, in our apprehension, always make some approach to the character of plain and popular.

Another blemish which strikes us in this work, is the frequent use of interrogations, introduced, not only in the warm and impassioned parts, where they are graceful, but in the midst of argumentative discussion. We have been struck with the prevalence of this practice in the more recent works of clergymen, beyond those of any other order of men. With Demosthenes, we know interrogation was a very favorite figure ; but we recollect, at the same time, it was chiefly confined to the more vehement parts of his speeches ; in which, like the eruptions of a furnace, he broke out upon, and consumed his opponents. In him it was the natural expression of triumphant indignation : after he had subdued and laid them prostrate by the force of his arguments, by his abrupt and terrible interrogations he trampled them in the mire. In calm and dispassionate discussion, the frequent use of questions appears to us unnatural ; it discomposes the attention by a

sort of starting and irregular motion ; and is a violation of dignity by affecting to be lively, where it is sufficient praise to be cogent and convincing. In a word, when, instead of being used to give additional vehemence to a discourse, they are interspersed in a series of arguments as an expedient for enlivening the attention, and varying the style, they have an air of undignified flippancy. We should scarcely have noticed these little circumstances in an inferior work, but we could not satisfy ourselves to let them pass without observation in an author, who, to merits of a more substantial nature, joins so many and such just pretensions to the character of a fine writer.

REVIEW
OF
GREGORY'S LETTERS,
ORIGINALLY INSERTED IN THE
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REVIEW.

Letters to a Friend, on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion. BY OLINTHUS GREGORY, L. L. D. Of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.

As this is a work of no ordinary merit, and written upon a subject which all must confess to be of the last importance, we shall endeavor, after being indulged with a few preliminary remarks, to give a pretty copious analysis of its contents; not doubting the greater part of our readers will be solicitous to avail themselves of the rich entertainment and instruction, which its perusal will unquestionably afford. The first volume is employed in the discussion of a subject which has engaged the powers of the wisest of men through a series of ages; and minds of every size, and of every diversity of acquisition, having contributed their quota towards its elucidation, the accumulation of materials is such, that it has become more necessary, perhaps more difficult, to arrange than to invent. In the conduct of so extensive an argument, the talents of the writer will chiefly appear, in giving the due degree of relief and prominence to the different branches of the subject,—in determining what should be placed in a strong and brilliant light, and what should be more slightly sketched,—and disposing the whole in such a manner as shall give it the most impressive effect. If there is little room for the display of invention, other powers are requisite, not less rare or less useful; a nice and discriminating judgement, a true logical taste, and a talent of extensive combination. An ordinary thinker feels himself lost in so wide a field; is incapable of classifying the objects it presents; and wastes his attention on such as are trite and common, instead of directing it to those which are great and interesting. If there are subjects which it is difficult to discuss for want of data to proceed upon, and, while they allure by their appearance of abstract grandeur, are soon found to lose themselves in fruitless logomachies and unmeaning subtleties, such as the greater part of the discussions on time, space, and necessary existence; there are

others whose difficulty springs from an opposite cause,—from the immense variety of distinct topics and considerations involved in their discussion; of which the divine origination of Christianity is a striking specimen,—which it has become difficult to treat as it ought to be treated, merely in consequence of the variety and superabundance of its proofs.

On this account, we suspect that this great cause has been not a little injured by the injudicious conduct of a certain class of preachers and writers, who, in just despair of being able to handle a single topic of religion to advantage, for want of having paid a devout attention to the Scriptures, fly like harpies to the evidences of Christianity, on which they are certain of meeting with something prepared to their hands, which they can tear, and soil, and mangle at their pleasure.

Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fœdant.

The famine, also, with which their prototypes in Virgil threatened the followers of Æneas, is not more dismal than that which prevails among their hearers. The folly we are adverting to, did not escape the observation nor the ridicule of Swift, who remarked in his days, that the practice of mootings, on every occasion, the question of the origin of Christianity, was much more likely to unsettle the faith of the simple, than to counteract the progress of infidelity. It is dangerous to familiarize every promiscuous audience to look upon religion as a thing which yet remains to be proved,—to acquaint them with every sophism and cavil which a perverse and petulant ingenuity has found out, unaccompanied, as is too often the case, with a satisfactory answer; thus leaving the poison to operate without the antidote, in minds which ought to be strongly imbued with the principles, and awed by the sanctions of the gospel. It is degrading to the dignity of a revelation, established through a succession of ages by indubitable proofs, to be adverting every moment to the hypothesis of its being an imposture, and to be inviting every insolent sophist to wrangle with us about the title, when we should be cultivating the possession. The practice we are now censuring is productive of another inconvenience. The argument for the truth of Christianity, being an argument of accumulation, or, in other words, of that nature that the force of it results less from any separate consideration than from an almost infinite variety of circumstances, conspiring towards one point and terminating in one conclusion; this concentration of evidence is broken to pieces, when an attempt is made to present it in superficial descants,—than which nothing can be conceived better calculated to make what is great appear little, and what is ponderous, light. The trite observation that a cause

is injured by the adoption of feeble arguments, rests on a basis not often considered, perhaps, by those who most readily assent to its truth. We never think of estimating the powers of the imagination on a given subject, by the actual performance of the poet; but if he disappoint us, we immediately ascribe his failure to the poverty of his genius, without accusing his subject or his art. The regions of fiction we naturally conceive to be boundless. But when an attempt is made to convince us of the truth of a proposition respecting a matter of fact or a branch of morals, we take it for granted, that he who proposes it has made himself perfectly master of his argument, and that, as no consideration has been neglected that would favor his opinion, we shall not err in taking our impression of the cause from the defence of its advocate. If that cause happen to be such as involves the dearest interests of mankind, we need not remark how much injury it is capable of sustaining from this quarter.

Let us not be supposed, by these remarks, to comprehend within our censure, the writer, who, amidst the multifarious proofs of revelation, selects a single topic with a view to its more elaborate discussion, provided it be of such a nature that it will support an independent train of thought,—such, for example, as Paley has pursued in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, to which a peculiar value ought to be attached, as a clear addition to the body of Christian evidences. All we mean to assert is, that it is incomparably better to be silent on the evidences of Christianity, than to be perpetually adverting to them in a slight and superficial manner, and that a question so awful and momentous as that relating to the origin of the Christian religion, ought not to be debased into a trivial common place. Let it be formally discussed, at proper intervals, by such men, and such only, as are capable of bringing to it the time, talents, and information requisite to place it in a commanding attitude.—That the author of the present performance is possessed of these qualifications to a very great degree, will sufficiently appear from the analysis we propose to give of the work, and the specimens we shall occasionally exhibit of its execution.

It is ushered in by a modest and dignified dedication to Colonel Mudge, lieutenant governor of that royal military institution, of which the author is so distinguished an ornament. The whole is cast into the form of letters to a friend; and the first volume, we are given to understand, formed the subject of an actual correspondence. As much of the epistolary style is preserved as is consistent with the nature of a serious and protracted argument, without ill-judged attempts at refreshing the attention of the reader by strokes of gaiety and humor. The mind of the writer appears to have been too deeply impressed with his theme, to admit

of such excursions, the absence of which will not, we are persuaded, be felt or regretted.

Before he proceeds to state the direct proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, he shows, in a very striking manner, the absurdities which must of necessity be embraced by those who deny all pretences to revelation; enumerating in the form of a creed, the various strange and untenable positions, which form the subject of skeptical belief. In this part of the work, that disease in the intellectual temperament of infidels is placed in a stronger and juster light than we remember to have seen it, which may not improperly be denominated the credulity of unbelievers. This representation forms the contents of the first letter.

The necessity of revelation is still more indisputably evinced, by an appeal to facts, and a survey of the opinions which prevailed among the most enlightened heathens, respecting God, moral duty, and a future state. Under each of these heads, our author has selected, with great judgement, numerous instances of the flagrant and pernicious errors entertained by the most celebrated Pagan legislators, poets, and philosophers; sufficient to demonstrate, beyond all contradiction, the inability of unassisted reason, in its most improved and perfect state, to conduct man to virtue and happiness, and the necessity, thence resulting, of superior aid. Much diligence of research, and much felicity of arrangement, are displayed in the management of this complicated topic, where the reader will find exhibited, in a condensed form, the most material facts adduced in Leland's voluminous work on this subject. All along, he holds the balance with a firm and steady hand, without betraying a disposition, either to depreciate the value of those discoveries and improvements to which reason really attained, or charging the picture of its aberrations and defects, with deeper shades than justly belong to it. The most eminent among the Pagans themselves, it ought to be remembered, who, having no other resource, were best acquainted with its weakness and its power, never dreamed of denying the necessity of revelation; this they asserted in the most explicit terms, and on some occasions seem to have expected and anticipated the communication of such a benefit. We make no apology for citing, from the present work, the following remarkable passage out of Plato, tending both to confirm the fact of a revelation being anticipated, and to evince, supposing nothing supernatural in the case, the divine sagacity of that great author. He says, that 'this just person, (the inspired teacher of whom he had been speaking,) must be poor and void of all qualifications, but those of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproofs; and therefore, within three or four years after he began

to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last, be put to death.* In whatever light we consider it, this must be allowed to be a most remarkable passage,—whether we regard it as merely the conjecture of a highly enlightened mind, or as the fruit of prophetic suggestion; nor are we aware of any absurdity in supposing that the prolific Spirit scattered, on certain occasions, some seeds of truth amidst that mass of corruption and darkness which oppressed the Pagan world. The opinion we have ventured to advance, is asserted in the most positive terms in several parts of Justin Martyr's second Apology. Without pursuing this inquiry further, we shall content ourselves with remarking, that as the sufficiency of mere reason as the guide to truth never entered into the conception of Pagans, so it could never have risen at all, but in consequence of confounding its results with the dictates of Revelation, which, since its publication, has never ceased to modify the speculations, and aid the inquiries of those, who are at least disposed to bow to its authority. On all questions of morality and religion, the streams of thought have flowed through channels enriched with a celestial ore, whence they have derived the tincture to which they are indebted for their rarest and most salutary qualities.

Before we dismiss this subject, we would just observe that the inefficacy of unassisted reason in religious concerns appears undeniably in two points; the doubtful manner in which the wisest Pagans were accustomed to express themselves respecting a future state, the existence of which, Warburton is confident none of the philosophers believed; and their proud reliance on their own virtue, which was such as left no room for repentance. Of a future state, Socrates, in the near prospect of death, is represented by Plato as expressing a hope, accompanied with the greatest uncertainty; and with respect to the second point, the lofty confidence in their own virtue, which we have imputed to them, the language of Cicero, in one of his familiar letters, is awfully decisive. 'Nec enim dum ero, angor ulla re, cum *omni caream culpa*; et si non ero, sensu omni carebo.' 'While I exist, I shall be troubled at nothing, since I have no fault whatever; and if I shall not exist, I shall be devoid of feeling.†' So true is it, that life and immortality are brought to light by the Saviour, and that until he appeared, the greatest of men were equally unacquainted with their present condition, and their future prospects.

The next letter, which is the fourth in the series, is on mysteries in religion. Aware that while the prejudice against whatever is mysterious subsists, the saving truths of the gospel can find no

* De Republica. L. II. † Vol. I. p. 51.

entrance, the author has taken great, and, as far as the force of argument can operate, successful pains, to point out the weakness of the foundations on which that prejudice rests. He has shown, by a large induction of particulars, in natural religion, natural philosophy, and in pure and mixed mathematics, that with respect to each of these sciences, we arrive by infallible steps to conclusions, of which we can form no clear, determinate conceptions; and that the higher parts of mathematics especially, the science which glories in its superior light and demonstration, teem with mysteries as incomprehensible to the full, as those which demand our assent in Revelation. His skill as a mathematician, for which he has long been distinguished, serves him on this occasion to excellent purpose, by enabling him to illustrate his subject by well selected examples from his favorite science, and by that means to prove in the most satisfactory manner that the mysterious parts of Christianity are exactly analogous to the difficulties inseparable from other branches of knowledge, not excepting those which make the justest pretensions to demonstration. We run no hazard in affirming, that rarely, if ever, have superior philosophical attainments been turned to a better account, or a richer offering brought from the fields of science into the temple of God. Some of his illustrations being drawn from the sublimer speculations of mathematics, must necessarily be unintelligible to ordinary readers; but many of them are plain and popular; and he has succeeded in making the principle on which he reasons throughout, perfectly plain and perspicuous, which is this—that we are able, in a multitude of instances, to ascertain the *relations* of things, while we know little or nothing of the *nature* of the things themselves. If the distinction itself is not entirely new, the force of argument with which it is supported, and the extent to which its illustration is carried, are such as evince much original thinking. We should seriously recommend this part of the work to the perusal of the Barrister, if he were capable of understanding it; and to all, without exception, who have been perverted by the shallow and ambiguous sophism first broached, we believe, by Dr. Foster, that where mystery begins, religion ends;—when the fact is, that religion and mystery both begin and end together; a portion of what is inscrutable to our faculties, being intimately and inseparably blended with its most vital and operative truths. A religion without its mysteries is a temple without its God.

Having thus marked out the ground, removed the rubbish, and made room for the foundation, our author proceeds with the skill of a master, to erect a firm and noble structure, conducting the argument for the truth of Christianity through all its stages, and commencing his labors in this part of the subject, with establishing

the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred volume. As he manifestly aims at utility, not at display, we are glad to find he has availed himself of the profound and original reasoning of Hartley, which he has fortified all along with the ingenious reflections of his own, and crowned by an appeal to the principal testimonies of Christian and Pagan antiquity. The letter devoted to this subject is long, but not more so than the occasion demanded, and is replete with varied and extensive information. To the whole he has annexed a very accurate and particular account of the researches and discoveries of Dr. Buchanan, made during his visit to the Syrian Churches in India ; nor are we aware that there is a single consideration of moment, tending to confirm the genuineness and integrity of the Scriptures in their present state, which in the course of our author's extended investigation has escaped his notice. By some he will be blamed for placing the proofs of the authenticity of the sacred records before the argument from prophecy and miracles ; but we think he is right in adopting such an arrangement ; since the reasoning on this part not only stands independent of the sequel, but greatly abridges his subsequent labor, by enabling him to appeal, on every occasion, to the testimony of Scripture, not indeed as inspired, but as an authentic document, that point having been previously established ; while it is in perfect unison with that solicitude he every where evinces, to imbue the mind of his readers with a serious and devotional spirit. Here is a book of a singular character, and of a high antiquity, from which Christians profess to derive the whole of their information on religion,—and it comes down to us under such circumstances, that every thing relating to it is capable of being investigated, apart from the consideration of prophecies and miracles, except its claim to inspiration. Why then should not the pretensions of this book be examined at the very outset, as far as they are susceptible of an independent examination ; since the proof of its being genuine and authentic, will extend its consequences so far into the subsequent matter of discussion, as well as exert a great and salutary influence on the mind of the inquirer.

The next letter is devoted to the subject of prophecy ; in which, after noticing a few of the more remarkable predictions relating to the revolutions of power and empire, he descends to a more particular investigation of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, which he arranges under three heads ; such as respect the time and place of his appearance—his character, doctrine, rejection, and final triumph—and the exact correspondence betwixt his contemptuous treatment and sufferings, and the representations of the ancient oracles. Under the last, he embraces the opportunity of rescuing the proof from the 53d chapter of Isaiah, from the

cavils of the Jews, as well as from the insinuation of certain infidels, that the prophecy was written after the event; which he triumphantly refutes by an appeal to a remarkable passage in the books of Origen against Celsus. In confirming the inference from prophecy, we again meet with a judicious application of the author's mathematical skill, by which he demonstrates, from the doctrine of chances, the almost infinite improbability of the occurrence of even a small number of contingent events predicted of any one individual; and the absolute impossibility, consequently, of accounting for the accomplishment of such numerous predictions as were accomplished in the person of the Messiah, without ascribing it to the power and wisdom of the Deity.

From the consideration of prophecy, he proceeds to the evidence from miracles, and the credibility of human testimony. He begins with stating, in few and simple terms, but with much precision, the just idea of a miracle, which, he remarks, has oftener been obscured than elucidated by definition, while the sentiments entertained by good men upon the subject have been almost uniformly correct, when they have not been entangled or heated by controversy. This branch of the evidences of revelation is certainly very little indebted to the introduction of subtle refinements. In resting the evidence of the Jewish and Christian revelations on the ground of miracles, the author restricts his proposition to *uncontrolled miracles*; on the propriety of which different judgements will probably be formed by his readers. We believe him to be right; since, admitting the limitation to be unnecessary, it is but an extreme of caution, a leaning to the safe side; for who will deny, that it is much easier to prove it to be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, to permit an *uncontrolled* miracle to be performed in support of error, than to demonstrate from a metaphysical consideration of the powers and capacities of spiritual agents of a higher order, their incapacity of accomplishing what to our apprehensions must appear supernatural. The writer of this, at least, must confess for himself, he could never find any satisfaction in such speculations, not even in those of Farmer, ingenious as they are, which always appeared to him to be like advancing to an object by a circuitous and intricate path, rather than take the nearest road. But to return to the present performance. After exhibiting the most approved answers to the flimsy sophistry of Hume, intended to evince the incredibility of miracles; and corroborating them by a copious illustration of the four criteria of miraculous facts, suggested by Leslie in his admirable work, entitled, "A short Method with the Deists," he reduces the only suppositions which can be formed, respecting the miracles recorded in the New Testament, to the four following, which we shall give in the words of the author:

‘ Either, first, the recorded accounts of those miracles were absolute fictions, wickedly invented by some who had a wish to impose upon mankind :

‘ Or, secondly, Jesus did not work any true miracles ; but the senses of the people were in some way or other deluded, so that they believed he really did perform miracles, when, in fact, he did not :

‘ Or, thirdly, that the spectators were not in any way deluded, but knew very well he wrought no miracles ; yet were all, (both enemies and friends, the Jews themselves not excepted, though they daily “ sought occasion against him,”) united in a close confederacy, to persuade the world he wrought the most surprising things. So that while most actively circulated reports of those amazing occurrences, the rest kept their counsel, never offering to unmask the fraud, but managing the matter with so much dexterity and cunning, and such an exact harmony and correspondence, that the story of Jesus Christ’s performing miracles should become current, should obtain almost universal credit, *and not a single person be able to disprove it :*

‘ Or, fourthly, that he did actually perform those astonishing works, and that the accounts given of them by the Christian writers in the New Testament are authentic and correct.

‘ He that does not adopt the last of these conclusions, will find it a matter of very small consequence which of the three he chooses ; for that the stories cannot be *fictions*, is evident from the reasonings of Leslie, already adduced : and it will be seen further, from a moment’s consideration, that the denial of the miracles of Jesus Christ, *in any way*, leads necessarily to the admission of a series of real miracles of another kind.’

He closes this part of the disquisition with an elaborate confutation of the notion too generally admitted by the advocates of Revelation, that the evidence of miraculous facts necessarily grows weaker in proportion to the distance of time at which they were performed ; and in no part does the vigor of his understanding appear to more advantage than in his reasonings on this point, where, among many excellent, we meet with the following profound remark :

‘ It is only,’ he observes, ‘ with regard to the facts recorded in the Bible, that men ever talk of the daily diminution of credibility. Who complains of a decay of evidence in relation to the actions of Alexander, Hannibal, Pompey, or Cæsar ? How many fewer of the events recorded by Plutarch, or Polybius, or Livy, are believed now (on account of a diminution of evidence) than were believed by Mr. Addison, or Lord Clarendon, or Geoffrey Chaucer ? We never hear persons wishing they had lived ages earlier, that they might have had better proofs that Cyrus was the conqueror of Babylon, that Da-

rius was beaten in several battles by Alexander, that Titus destroyed Jerusalem, that Hannibal was entirely routed by Scipio, or Pompey by Julius Cæsar ; though we sometimes find men of excellent and enterprising minds exclaiming, "O that I had lived and been present, when such splendid events occurred ; how lively an interest should I have taken in such scenes, how much concern in their termination !" And indeed it is the frequent hearing of such exclamations, that causes men *to confound weight of evidence with warmth or depth of feeling ; and to lose sight of the essential difference between real evidence, or the true basis of belief in history, and the sensible impression or influence which such history may make upon the mind.*

We have only to remark, before we dismiss this subject, that, whereas the evidence of facts which occurred at a distant period is usually placed under the head of *successive* evidence, this distinction, as applicable to the miracles of the Gospel, must either be rejected altogether, or admitted with a caution against being misled by the ambiguous use of words. The evidence, in this case, is not to be confounded for a moment with that of a report transmitted through successive ages to the present time, since the record which contains the miraculous facts carries us back to the apostolic age ; so that, admitting its antiquity to be what it pretends, of which there is the most satisfactory evidence, the only link in the succession is that which separates the performers or spectators of the miracles from their narrators, who in the case before us, however, are frequently the same persons.

In order to give that conspicuous place which is due to the greatest and most momentous of these miracles, as well as to do justice to the independent train of proofs by which it is supported, Dr. G. has assigned a separate letter to the resurrection of Christ, in which he has set this great fact in the clearest light ; and to remove every shadow of hesitation arising from the minute variations in the account given of it by the evangelists, has taken the pains to digest from their separate narratives a distinct statement of the whole transaction, which, as far as we have had time to examine it, appears very satisfactory.

To this succeeds an ample illustration of the argument for the truth of Christianity, drawn from its early and extensive propagation ; where the fact is placed beyond all contradiction, by numerous and decisive testimonies, adduced from the ancient apologists and pagan writers ; the dates of the ten successive persecutions are accurately assigned ; and the most striking circumstances attending the last, in particular, are distinctly and forcibly exhibited. This forms the subject of the ninth letter, which closes with some admirable observations on the intrinsic excellence of

the religion of Jesus, tending to show that it corresponds to all the characters, and fulfils all the indications, which a revelation from Heaven might be expected to possess.

The remaining letters which compose this volume are employed in proving the inspiration of the Scriptures, and answering various miscellaneous objections and cavils advanced against the Bible.

We proceed to notice the most important positions and reasonings contained in the second volume, which the author has devoted to a display of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. We are aware that many will suspect him of a partial and bigotted attachment to his own opinions, in consequence of the anxiety he manifests to communicate and support those views of Christianity, which, in his estimation, form its most striking peculiarity. It is plain our author considers the evidences of Christianity as entirely subservient to its doctrines; and that he is consequently far from supposing, with some modern divines, that he has accomplished his work by proving that Christianity is a true and a genuine revelation from God. He judges it necessary to spend some time and some labor in considering *what it is* that is true, what it is that is revealed. Were we not familiar with the fact, we should not be a little surprised at the prevalence of a contrary persuasion: we should probably think it strange, that such an anxiety should be evinced to rest the truth of Christianity on the firmest possible basis, along with such a profound indifference to every attempt to investigate its import. Some wonderful charm, it seems, is contained in a bare avowal that Christianity is a revelation from God, apart from any distinct perceptions of its truths, or any solemn advertence to its genuine scope and tendency. Embalmed and preserved like some Egyptian monarch, in the form of a venerable and antiquated document, it is to be carefully kept, and always approached with respect, but never allowed to take its place among the living, nor supposed to be useful to mankind according to any known law of operation. The most magnificent appellations are applied to it,—it is the light of the world, the true riches, the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price: all these, and a thousand other encomiums, are lavished on the Scriptures by men, who at the same time feel no scruple in insinuating that this boasted communication from heaven contains no truths beyond the limits of reason, and that what the bulk of Christians in our ages have deemed such, are the distempered visions of enthusiasm, if they are not, in some instances, to be ascribed to the erroneous conceptions entertained by the Apostles of the religion they were appointed to propagate. It is the *possession* of a revelation, not the *use*, which these men are accustomed

to contemplate and to value. As the miser conceives himself rich by the treasure which he never employs, so the persons to whom we allude, suppose themselves enlightened by a book from which they profess to derive no information, and saved by a religion which is allowed to engage little or none of their attention. This is one of the most distinguished features in the character of those, who with exemplary modesty style themselves *rational* Christians. In this spirit, a distinguished prelate of the present age* has published a collection of tracts for the benefit of the junior clergy, in which not a single treatise is admitted, which professes to exhibit a view of Christian doctrine; and has introduced it with a preface, ingeniously calculated, under pretence of decrying dogmas, to bring all such inquiries into contempt. It certainly is not difficult to perceive whence this manner of thinking proceeds, nor whither it tends. It proceeds from a rooted aversion to the genuine truths of Revelation; and had it not received a timely check, would have terminated in the general prevalence of skepticism. It presents a neutral ground, on which professed Christians and infidels may meet, and proceed to assail with their joint force the substantial truths of our religion. There is nothing in such views of Christianity to appal the infidel; nothing to mortify the pride, nothing to check or control the exorbitances, of that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God." In stripping the religion of Christ of all that is spiritual, it renders it weak and inefficacious as an instrument of renovating the mind; and by fostering its pride, and sparing its corruption, prepares it for shaking off the restraints of religion altogether. It gives us, however, unfeigned satisfaction to perceive, that the evil we so much deprecate, appears to have met with a fatal check; and that the present times are distinguished by two things, which we cannot but consider as most favorable prognostics,—an increased attention to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and a growing unanimity with respect to the modes in which those doctrines are entertained. There is less disposition, on the one hand, to receive for Christianity a system of Pagan ethics, and on the other to confound points of doubtful speculation with its fundamental doctrines. The religious zeal of the present day is more noble and catholic than in former times, partaking less of the acrimony of party, and more of the inspiration of truth and charity. The line of demarcation betwixt sound doctrines and heresy is better ascertained, than it has ever been before; and the Christian world are equally averse to whatever approaches to Socinian impiety, and to the mooted of interminable questions.

* Bishop Watson.

In the statement of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, there are two extremes to be avoided. The one is, that of pusillanimously shrinking from their bold originality, and attempting to recommend them to the acceptance of proud and worldly-minded men by the artifices of palliation and disguise, of which, in our opinion, the Bishop of Lincoln has given an egregious specimen in his late work ;* the other extreme is that of stating them in a metaphysical form, mixing doubtful deductions with plain assertions, and thereby encumbering them with needless subtleties and refinements. We should neither be ashamed of the dictates of the Spirit, nor "add to his words, lest we be reproved." They will always appear with the most advantage, and carry the most conviction, when they are exhibited in their native simplicity, without being mixed with heterogeneous matter, or with positions of doubtful authority. In our apprehension, the true way of contemplating the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, is to consider them as *facts* believed on the authority of the Supreme Being, not to be proved by reason, since their truth does not result from any perceptible relations in our ideas, but they owe their existence entirely to the will and counsel of the Almighty Potentate. On this account we never consider it safe to rest their truths on a philosophical basis, nor imagine it is possible to add to their evidence by an elaborate train of reasoning. Let the fair grammatical import of Scripture language be investigated, and whatever propositions are by an easy and natural interpretation deducible from thence, let them be received as the dictates of Infinite Wisdom, whatever aspect they bear, or whatever difficulties they present. Repugnant to reason, they never can be, because they spring from the Author of it ; but superior to reason, whose limits they will infinitely surpass, we must expect to find them, since they are a communication of such matters of fact respecting the spiritual and eternal world, as need not have been communicated if the knowledge of them could have been acquired from any other quarter. The facts with which we have become acquainted in the natural world would appear stupendous, were they communicated merely on the evidence of testimony : they fail to astonish us, chiefly because they have been arrived at step by step, by means of their analogy to some preceding one. We have climbed the eminence by a slow progression, and our prospect has insensibly widened as we advanced, instead of being transported thither instantaneously by a superior power. Revelation conducts us to the truth at once, without previous training, without any intellectual process preceding, without condescending to afford other proof than what

* Entitled "A Refutation of Calvinism."

results from the veracity and wisdom of the Creator ; and when we consider that this truth respects much sublimer relations and concerns than those which subsist in the material world, that it regards the ways and counsels of God respecting man's eternal destiny, is it surprising it should embrace what greatly surpassed our previous conjectures, and even transcends our perfect comprehension? To a serious and upright mind, however, its discoveries are no sooner made than they become supremely acceptable ; the interposition of the Deity in the great moral drama is seen to be absolutely necessary ; since none but Infinite Wisdom could clear up the intricacies, nor any power short of Omnipotence relieve the distress it produced. These very truths which some ridicule as mysteries, and others despise as dogmas, are to the enlightened "sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb," apart from which, whatever else is contained in the Bible, would be perfectly tasteless and insipid. Though he receives every communication from God with devout and grateful emotions, he feels no hesitation in confessing, that it is in these parts of Revelation, he especially exults and triumphs ; it is these, which in his estimation entitle it to the appellation of "*marvellous light*."

If it is no small gratification, to find so perfect a concurrence in these sentiments, on the part of our author ; to find them stated and illustrated in so able a manner as they are throughout this work, is a still greater. The first letter in this volume is devoted to a general view of the Christian Doctrines, designed to obviate certain prejudices, and to prepare the mind for that serious inquiry into their nature and import, which cannot fail, under the blessing of God, of conducting it to the most satisfactory conclusions.

Our author never loses sight of the gospel as a *restorative dispensation*. This is its primary and most essential feature ; and the most dangerous and numerous aberrations from it, may be traced to the neglect of considering it in this light. It is not the prescription of a rule of life to the innocent, but the annunciation of a stupendous method of relief for the sinner. Overlooking all petty varieties, and subordinate distinctions, it places the whole human race on one level ; abases them all in the dust before the Infinite Majesty ; and offers indiscriminately a provision of sanctification to the polluted, and of pardon to the guilty. These are the glad tidings ; this is the jubilee of the whole earth, proclaimed in the songs of angels, celebrated in the praises of the church, alike in her militant and her triumphant state, whether toiling in the vale of mortality, or rejoicing before the throne.

The second letter in the series which composes this volume, is on the Depravity of Human Nature ; where the reader will find the evidence of that melancholy, but fundamental truth, exhibited

with much conciseness, perspicuity, and force. The third is employed in stating the arguments for the Atonement of Christ under the four divisions of typical, prophetic, historical, and declamatory proofs; and the whole is closed by a very luminous and satisfactory answer to the most specious objections against that momentous truth. In adverting to the objection to a vicarious sacrifice, founded on the notion of its being unjust that the innocent should be appointed to suffer in the room of the guilty, we meet with the following admirable passage of Archbishop Tillotson, remarkable for that perfect good sense, simplicity, and perspicuity, which distinguish the writings of that excellent prelate.

‘If the matter,’ says he, ‘were searched to the bottom, all this perverse contention about our Saviour’s suffering for our benefit, but not in our stead, will signify just nothing. For if Christ died for our benefit, so as some way or other, *by virtue of his death and sufferings* to save us from the wrath of God, and to procure our escape from eternal death,—this for aught I know, is all that any body means by his dying in our stead. For he that dies with an intention to do that benefit for another, or to *save him from death*, doth certainly, to all intents and purposes, die in his place and stead. And if they will grant this to be their meaning, the controversy is at an end; and both sides are agreed in the thing, and do only differ in the phrase and manner of expression, which is to seek a quarrel and an occasion of difference, when there is no real ground for it; a thing which ought to be very far from reasonable and peaceable minds. For many of the Socinians say, that our Saviour’s voluntary death and sufferings procured his exaltation at the right hand of God, and power and authority to forgive sins, and to give eternal life to as many as he pleased; so that they grant that his obedience and sufferings, in the meritorious consequence of them, redound to our benefit and advantage, as much as we pretend to say they do; only they are loth, in express terms, to acknowledge that Christ died in our stead; and this for no other reason that I can imagine, but *because they have denied it so often and so long.*’ Vol. II. p. 64.

We have only to say, on this part of the subject, that we heartily commiserate the state of that man’s mind, who, whatever Socinian prejudices he may have felt against the most glorious of all doctrines, that of the atonement, does not feel them shaken, at least, if not removed, by the arguments adduced in this letter.

The next is devoted to the defence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which our author evinces in a masterly manner, from the predictions of the ancient prophets, compared with their application in the New Testament,—from the conduct, the miracles, and the discourses, of our Lord,—from the declarations of his apos-

tles,—and from the concurrent testimony of the early Christian writers and martyrs, before the Council of Nice. Under the last head, the reader will meet with a copious induction of passages attesting this grand doctrine, selected with much judgement, and applied with great force. The author all along contends for the divinity of Christ as a *fundamental* tenet; and, of course, will forfeit all pretensions to candor with *rational* Christians, on whose approbation, indeed, he appears to set very little value.

In the next letter, which is on Conversion, he has treated of the nature and necessity of that new birth, on which our Lord insisted so strenuously in his discourse with Nicodemus, in a manner which will be as offensive to mere nominal Christians, as it will be instructive and satisfactory to serious and humble inquirers after truth. He shews, from well known and indubitable facts, the reality of such a change; and evinces its indispensable necessity, from the express declarations of Scripture, the corruption of human nature, the exalted character of the Deity, and the nature of that pure and perfect felicity to which good men aspire after death. In illustrating this subject, he has made a happy use of Bishop Burnet's narrative of the conversion of the Earl of Rochester,—has carefully guarded his readers against the pernicious error of confounding regeneration with baptism,—and has closed the discussion with solving certain difficulties arising out of the subject, which have often perplexed serious minds.

As every effect naturally invites us to contemplate the cause, he passes from conversion to the consideration of Divine Influence, which is the subject of the succeeding letter; and were we to give our opinion of the comparative merit of the different parts of this volume, we should be inclined to assign the palm to the disquisition on this confessedly mysterious subject. In no part, certainly, is the vigor of the author's very powerful understanding more eminently exerted; in none are the prejudices founded on a pretended philosophy more triumphantly dispelled. He has shewn, in the most satisfactory manner, that the belief of an immediate divine influence on the mind, not only accords with the sentiments of the wisest men in Pagan times, but that it is rendered highly reasonable by the close analogy it bears to the best established laws of the material world. Though there are many admirable passages in this portion of the work, which it would gratify us to lay before our readers, we must content ourselves with the following.

'No person can look into the world with the eye of a philosopher, and not soon ascertain, that the grand theatre of phenomena which lies before him, is naturally subdivided into two great classes of scenery; the one exhibiting constrained, the other voluntary motion; the former characteristic of matter, the latter as clearly indi-

eating something perfectly distinct from matter, and possessing totally opposite qualities. "Pulverize matter (says Saurin,) give it all the different forms of which it is susceptible, elevate it to its highest degree of attainment, make it vast and immense, moderate or small, luminous or obscure, opaque or transparent, there will never result any thing but *figures*; and never will you be able, by all these combinations or divisions, to produce one single sentiment, one single thought." The reason is obvious: a substance compounded of innumerable parts, which every one acknowledges matter to be, cannot be the subject of an individual consciousness, the seat of which *must* be a simple and undivided substance: as the great Dr. Clark has long ago irrefragably shewn. Intellect and volition are quite of a different nature from corporeal figure, or motion, and must reside in, or emanate from, a different kind of being, a kind, which, to distinguish it from matter, is called spirit, or mind. Of these, the one is necessarily inert, the other essentially active. The one is characterized by want of animation, life, and even motion, except as it is urged by something *ab extra*; the other is living, energetic, self-moving, and possessed of power to move other things. We often fancy, it is true, that matter moves matter; but this, strictly speaking, is not correct. When one wheel, or lever, in a system of machinery, communicates motion to matter, it can, at most, only communicate what it has received; and if you trace the connexion of the mechanism, you will at length arrive at a first mover, which first mover is, in fact, *spiritual*. If, for example, it be an animal, it is evidently the spiritual part of that animal from whence the motion originally springs. If otherwise, if it be the descent of a weight, or the fall of water, or the force of a current of air, or the expansive power of steam, the action must be ultimately referred to what are styled powers of nature, that is, to gravitation or elasticity; and these, it is now well known, cannot be explained by any allusion to material principles, but to the indesinent operation of the Great Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being—the finger of God touching and urging the various subordinate springs, which, in their turn, move the several parts of the universe. Thus God acts in all places, in all times, and upon all persons. The whole material world, were it not for his Spirit, would be inanimate and inactive; all motion is derived either from his energy, or from a spirit which he animates; and it is next to *certain*, that the only primary action is that of spirit, and the most direct and immediate that of spirit upon spirit.' P. 154.

We doubt not the intelligent reader will be of opinion that the author has gone to the very bottom of this subject, and will feel himself highly gratified in seeing it placed in so clear and convincing a light; the more so, as he has taken care to guard against its most obvious abuse, by shewing that the influence, for which he contends, is not to be expected independent of means,—among which he considers prayer, and conscientious regard to known

duty, as the principal. We earnestly recommend this part of the performance to such of our readers as have, upon too light grounds, imbibed philosophical prejudices against the doctrine contended for; a doctrine which lies at the foundation of all spiritual religion, though treated by many with an excess of insolence and scorn, which can hardly be accounted for, without adverting to the injudicious conduct of its advocates.

The important doctrine of Justification by Faith, forms the subject of the next letter in the series. Here, after confirming the position he means to defend by the authority of the Homilies, he proceeds to a more particular discussion of the subject, under three heads of inquiry: What is meant by justification—what by faith—and what is the genuine import of “justification by faith.” Under each of these, the reader will meet with much instruction, arising from a very luminous statement of truth, accompanied with happy illustrations. The charge against the doctrine pleaded for, of its tending to licentiousness, is very successfully combated and refuted.

The exhibition of the leading *doctrines* of Christianity is completed in the three following letters,—on Providence, the Resurrection, and the Eternal Existence of Man after Death. We perused with much satisfaction, the author's masterly defence of a particular providence, the denial of which is, to all practical purposes, equivalent to the denial of a providence altogether. Trust in God is the act of an individual, as all the exercises of piety must necessarily be; so that if the providence of God embraces not the concerns of individuals, no rational foundation can be conceived for expecting protection from danger, or relief under distress, in answer to prayer. The denial of a particular providence is, it must be confessed, the best possible expedient for keeping God at a distance—and on that account so vehemently insisted on by certain periodical writers, the poison of whose impiety, prepared, it is generally understood, by *hallowed* hands, and distributed through the nation in a popular and seducing vehicle, has met with a powerful antidote and rebuke from Dr. Gregory, who, himself a layman, will be honored as a champion of that religion, which a clergyman has insulted and betrayed.* How is it that the conductors of the publication alluded to, allot to this clerical associate the province of libelling religion? Is it that its alliance with nominal sanctity gives rank impiety a new zest, at the same time that its total dereliction of principle more perfectly incorporates the specific design of the article with the general character of the work?

In treating of the Resurrection of the Dead, the author has hap-

* See the Article on Methodism in the Edinburgh Review.

pily availed himself of the striking analogies which the system of nature presents, as if designed on purpose, as Tertullian more than insinuates, to excite the expectation of such an event. Among others highly deserving attention, we shall present our readers with the following in the words of Dr. Gregory.

‘ Nearly allied to these are the examples of peculiar transformations undergone by various insects, and the state of rest, and insensibility, which precede those transformations ; such as the chrysalis, or aurelia state of butterflies, moths, and silk-worms. The myrmecoleon formicaleo, of whose larva, and its extraordinary history, Reaumur and Roesel have given accurate descriptions, continues in its insensible, or chrysalis state, about four weeks. The libellula, or dragon fly, continues still longer in its state of inaction. Naturalists tell us, that the worm repairs to the margin of its pond in quest of a convenient place of abode during its insensible state. It attaches itself to a plant, or piece of dry wood, and the skin, which gradually becomes parched and brittle, at last splits opposite to the upper part of the thorax ; through this aperture the insect, now become winged, quickly pushes its way ; and being thus extricated from confinement, begins to expand its wings, to flutter, and, finally, to launch into the air with that gracefulness and ease which are peculiar to this majestic tribe. Now who that saw, for the first time, the little pendant coffin in which the insect lay entombed, and was ignorant of the transformation of which we are now speaking, would ever predict that, in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days or hours, it would become one of the most elegant and active of *winged* insects ? And who that contemplates with the mind of a philosopher this curious transformation, and knows that two years before the insect mounts into the air, even while it is living in water, it has the rudiments of wings, can deny that the body of a dead man may, at some future period, be again invested with vigor and activity, and soar to regions for which some latent organization may have peculiarly fitted it.’ p. 225.

In descanting on the change that will be effected by the Resurrection, when we shall be invested with a glorified body, the language of the author rises to a high pitch of elevation, and exhibits a scene which surpasses the brightest visions of poetry, while the exactness of the delineation, in its most essential lineaments, is attested by the “true sayings of God.” The science with which the mind of the author is so richly imbued, enables him to mingle a refined spirit of philosophy with the colors of imagination, which without diminishing their brightness, compels the assent of the understanding, while it captivates the heart.

In the letter on the Eternal Existence after death, the author strenuously opposes the sleep of the soul, and urges formidable, and, we apprehend, irrefragable arguments for interpreting the

passages of Scripture which speak of the everlasting misery of the impenitent, in their obvious and literal sense; nor have we met with a discussion of this awful subject so calculated to carry conviction to a philosophical mind, provided it be disposed to bow to the authority of Revelation. His confutation of the reasoning of his opponents, founded on the supposed ambiguity of the terms employed to denote an eternal duration, is particularly masterly.

On the third branch of his subject, which relates to the Duties of Christianity, he is comparatively brief,—not, it is evident, from his undervaluing their importance, but partly, we conceive, on account of the length of his former discussions, and partly because, in this part, there is little room for controversy. He has contented himself with arranging the duties of Christianity under three heads—those which relate to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves; and with illustrating and enforcing them by a direct appeal to the language of Scripture.

Having endeavored to put our readers in possession of the general plan and design of this work, we shall close this article with a few general observations on it.

Dr. Gregory throughout denominates the abettors of the simple humanity of Christ, Socinians, instead of employing their favorite appellation of Unitarians. We rejoice that he has done so, and hope his example will be generally followed. To accede to the appellation of Unitarians, is to yield up the very point in debate; for ask them what they mean by Unitarian, and they will feel no scruple in replying, that it denotes a believer in one God, in opposition to a Tritheist. That this is not asserted at random, is evident, as well from many other facts, as from the following very remarkable one, that, when a noted academic was, some years since, expelled from the university of Cambridge, amidst various points which he insisted on in defence, one was this,—that it was quite absurd to censure him for avowing Unitarian principles, since he never heard but of one person who publicly declared himself *not an Unitarian*. Now what did he mean by this singular assertion? Did he mean to say, that he never heard of more than one person who publicly affirmed his belief in a *plurality* of *persons* in the Godhead? This is impossible. What could he mean, then, but that he never knew but of one person who affirmed himself *not to be a believer in one God?*—which is neither more nor less than to identify the term Unitarian with a believer in one God, and the term Trinitarian with a believer in three. Let the intelligent public judge, whether it is not high time to withhold from these men an appellation, which assumes the question at issue, and which cannot be bestowed without being converted into an occasion of insult and triumph over their opponents. There was a time when the learning and moderation of Lardner,

and the fame and science of Priestley, combined to throw a transitory splendor over their system, and to procure from the Christian world forbearance and complaisance to which they were ill entitled. That time is passed. Such *rational* Christians as they are, should have discernment to perceive, that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of their leader shone around them; it becomes them to bow their spirit to the humble state of their fortunes. They should learn at last to know themselves. The world is perfectly aware, whether they perceive it or not, that Socinianism is now a headless trunk, bleeding at every vein, and exhibiting no other symptoms of life, but its frightful convulsions.

But why should they be offended at being styled Socinians, when it is undeniable that they agree with Socinus in his fundamental position, (the simple humanity of Christ;) which is all the agreement that subsists betwixt the followers of Calvin or of Arminius, and those eminent persons? The Calvinists are far from concurring in every particular with Calvin, the Arminians with Arminius,—yet neither of them have violently disclaimed these appellations, or considered them as terms of reproach. Why are the Socinians only offended at being denominated after Socinus? Is it because they differ in the nature of Christ's person from that celebrated Heresiarch? This they will not pretend. But they differ from him in many respects! In what respects? Is it in those respects in which his sentiments gave most offence to the Christian world? Is it that they have receded from him in that direction which brings them nearer to the generally received doctrine of the church? Just the reverse. In the esteem of all but themselves they have descended many degrees lower in the scale of error, have plunged many fathoms deeper in the gulf of impiety; yet with an assurance, of which they have furnished the only example, they affect to consider themselves injured by being styled Socinians, when they know, in their own consciences, that they differ from Socinus only in pushing the degradation of the Saviour to a much greater length—and that, in the views of the Christian world, their religious delinquences differ from his, only as treason differs from sedition, or sacrilege from theft. The appellation of Socinian, as applied to them, is a term of forbearance, calculated, if they would suffer it, not to expose, but to hide a part of their shame. Let them assume any denomination they please, provided it be such as will fairly represent their sentiments. Let them be styled Anti-scripturalists, Humanitarians, Semi-deists, Priestleians, or Socinians. But let them not be designated by a term, which is merely coveted by them for the purposes of chicane and imposture.

Our readers will perceive that the system which Dr. Gregory strenuously abets is orthodoxy; but it is moderate and catholic;

it is the orthodoxy of the three first centuries ; it is that system which, communicated by Christ and his apostles, pervaded the church long before the confusion of modern sects arose, or even the distinction betwixt Protestants and Catholics was heard of ; it is orthodoxy which has nourished the root of piety in every age, warmed the breast of saints and martyrs, and will continue to subsist in the church till the heavens and the earth are no more.

We congratulate the public on the accession of Dr. G. to such a cause ; and sincerely rejoice that, amidst his multifarious scientific pursuits, he has found time and inclination to meditate so deeply, and to exhibit so successfully, the "truth as it is in Jesus." We hope his example will stimulate other men of science and genius to pursue so noble a career. We will venture to assure them, that, upon a dying bed, it will occasion no regret to reflect upon their having enrolled their names with such illustrious laymen as Boyle, Newton, and Locke, in the defence of Christianity.

In a beautiful passage of Euripides, Medea is introduced expressing her surprise, that, amidst such a multitude of inventions and inquiries, the art of persuasion, the mistress of human volition, should alone have been neglected. This neglect cannot be imputed to Dr. Gregory. He has united, with extraordinary attainments in the severer sciences, the art of recommending his sentiments with the most impressive effect ; and though he is above a solicitude respecting the minuter graces of finished composition, he exhibits, in an eminent degree, the most important ingredients of good writing. He is correct and luminous, and often rises to the tone of the most impassioned feeling. His language is eminently easy, flowing, and idiomatic. The abstractions of science have not in him exerted the influence often imputed to them, of chilling the heart, and impairing the vigor of the imagination. While he reasons with the comprehension and depth which distinguish the philosopher, he feels with ardor, and paints with force. He is often inspired and transported with his theme. In the midst of pursuits which are not always found to have a propitious effect on the religious character of their votaries, he has found the means of preserving his devotion in its warmth, his faith in its purity, and his sensibility in its infantine freshness and vigor.

We must conclude with earnestly recommending this work to the attentive perusal of young persons, whose minds have been cultivated by science and letters : and must be permitted to add, that we are acquainted with no book in the circle of English literature, which is equally calculated to give persons of that description, just views of the evidence, the nature, and the importance of revealed religion.

REVIEW
OF
MEMOIRS OF LINDSEY,
ORIGINALLY INSERTED IN THE
LONDON ECLECTIC REVIEW.

REVIEW.

Memoirs of the late Rev. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, A. M. Including a Brief Analysis of his Works; together with Anecdotes and Letters of eminent Persons, his Friends and Correspondents: also, a General View of the Progress of the Unitarian Doctrine in England and America. BY THOMAS BELSHAM, Minister of the Chapel in Essex-street. 8vo. pp. xxiv. 544.

As the life of Mr. Lindsey is evidently adopted as a vehicle for the propagation of Socinian sentiments, we shall be excused for being more copious in our remarks upon it, than the biography of a man of such extreme mediocrity of talents could otherwise possibly justify. If a zealous attachment to any system of opinions, can be supposed to be aided by its association with personal reputation, we cannot wonder at finding Mr. Lindsey's fondness for Socinianism so ardent and so persevering, inasmuch as the annals of religion scarcely furnish an instance of a celebrity acquired so entirely by the adoption of a particular creed. Luther and Calvin would have risen to distinction, in all probability, if the Reformation had never been heard of; while the existence of such a man as Mr. Lindsey, would not have been known beyond the precincts of his parish, had he not, under a peculiar combination of circumstances, embraced the tenets of Socinus.

His reputation is altogether accidental and factitious. Though the leading events of his life, with one exception, are marked by no striking peculiarities, yet, by the help of a great deal of adventitious matter, Mr. B. has contrived to make it the ground work of a bulky, and not unentertaining volume: disfigured, however, throughout, by that languid and inelegant verbosity, which characterises all his compositions. It must be confessed, Mr. Belsham has taken care in this work to exhibit himself as no ascetic, no religious enthusiast, but quite a man of the world; not by lively delineation of its manners and foibles, still less by a development of the principles by which mankind are actuated, but by such a profusion of compliments bestowed on men of rank and title, and so perfect a prostration before secular grandeur, as has

never been paralleled, we suspect, in a Christian Divine. At the 'pomp and circumstance' of human life, this philosopher appears awed, and planet struck, and utterly incapable of exercising that small portion of discrimination with which nature has endowed him. Every nobleman or statesman he has occasion to introduce, is uniformly ushered in with a splendid retinue of gorgeous epithets, in which there are as little taste and variety as if they had been copied verbatim from the rolls at the Herald's office. Orators of pre-eminent powers, together with virtuous and enlightened noblemen, meet us at every turn, and we are not a little surprised at finding so much of the decoration and splendor of this mortal scene, in so close contact with the historical details of Unitarianism. We have long remarked the eagerness of Socinians to emblazon their system by associations with learning, rank, and fashion; but on no other occasion have we seen this humor carried so far, as in these Memoirs.

The leading events of Mr. Lindsey's life are the following. He was born, June 20, 1723, at Middlewich, in Cheshire, where his father was a mercer in respectable circumstances, but was afterwards reduced by misfortunes. His mother, whose maiden name was Spencer, was distantly related to the Marlborough family, and, previously to her marriage, lived twenty years in the family of Frances, Countess of Huntingdon—a circumstance which led to considerable intimacy, that continued for some years, with the celebrated Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who married the son of that Lady. Under the patronage of Lady Betty and Lady Ann Hastings, Mr. Lindsey was educated first at a school in the neighborhood of Middlewich, whence he was removed, and placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, master of the free grammar school in that town, who is represented as a gentleman of distinguished learning and piety. His vacations were usually spent at the mansion of his noble patronesses in the vicinity of Leeds, during the life of Lady Betty Hastings, and, after her decease, at Ashby Place, near Ashby de la Zouch, in Leicestershire, where Lady Ann then fixed her residence. In the 18th year of his age, May 21, 1741, he was admitted a student at St. John's, Cambridge, where he acquitted himself with credit in his academical exercises, and behaved with such exemplary propriety as to attract the attention of Dr. Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln, who thought fit to entrust him with the care of his grandson, a youth of fifteen. He was elected fellow of St. John's College, in April, 1741. Having been ordained by Bishop Gisbon, he was, at the recommendation of Lady Ann Hastings, presented to a chapel in Spital-square, by Sir George Wheeler. In a short time after his settlement in London, the Duke of Somerset received

him into his house in the capacity of domestic chaplain. He continued after the decease of that nobleman, to reside some time with the Dutchess dowager, better known by the title of Countess of Hertford, and, at her request, he accompanied her grandson, the present Duke of Northumberland, then about nine years of age in a delicate state of health, to the continent, where he continued two years ; at the expiration of which time, he brought back his noble pupil, improved both in his health and learning. From this distinguished personage, he continued to receive attentions and favors as long as he lived. Immediately after his return from the continent, he was presented by the Earl of Northumberland, to the valuable rectory of Kirkby Whiske, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, at first under condition to resign it when the person for whom it was intended should come of age ; but this young man dying a short time afterwards, it was given to Mr. Lindsey unconditionally, in the usual form. In this very retired situation, Mr. Lindsey continued about three years ; and during his residence in Yorkshire, he became acquainted with the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne at Richmond ; a circumstance which led to important consequences, and to which he was indebted under Providence for the most important blessing of his life.

In the year 1756, at the request of the Huntingdon family, he resigned the living of Kirkby Whiske, for the living of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which was in the gift of the Earl of Huntingdon. In this place he lived seven years ; and in 1760, married Miss Elsworth, the step-daughter of Archdeacon Blackburne, a lady whose principles were congenial with his own, and who is represented as possessed of a superior understanding, and of exalted virtue. It was during his residence in that situation that he first began to entertain scruples concerning the lawfulness of Trinitarian worship, and of his continuing to officiate in the established church. It appears he had from his early youth disapproved of some things in the thirty-nine articles. Some years afterwards, these doubts were matured into a full conviction that the Divinity of Christ was an erroneous tenet, and that the Father was the sole object of worship ; in consequence of which, while in Dorsetshire, he took some previous steps with a view to quitting his preferment in the church. In the year 1762, upon the appointment of the late Duke of Northumberland to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he was strongly urged to accept the place of chaplain to his Grace ; which, from the preference he gave to a retired situation, he declined. An opportunity occurring the year following of exchanging his living for that of Catterick in Yorkshire, he made the exchange, for the sake of enjoying the society of Archdeacon Blackburne and his family, who lived in that neighborhood. On

this occasion, Mr. Belsham justly remarks, It may appear singular that Mr. Lindsey could submit to that renewed subscription, which was requisite in order to his induction to a new living.

‘And the case,’ he adds, ‘appears the more extraordinary, as many clergymen, who, in consequence of a revolution in their opinions, had become dissatisfied with the Articles, would never, for the sake of obtaining the most valuable preferment, subscribe them again, though while they were permitted to remain unmolested, they did not perceive it to be their duty to retire from the church.’ p. 17.

The extreme want of candor and sincerity evinced by such conduct, is very unsatisfactorily apologized for by Mr. Lindsey, and is very gently reprovèd by Mr. Belsham. The principal plea alleged by Mr. L. in defence of himself, is, that as he continued to officiate in the forms of the liturgy, his renewed subscription gave him little concern, since he considered himself, every time he used the liturgy, as virtually repeating his subscription. At length, he brought himself, he says, to consider the Trinitarian forms in the liturgy, and the invocations at the entrance of the litany, as

‘A threefold representation of the one God, the Father, governing all things by himself and by his Son and Spirit; and as a threefold way of addressing him as a Creator, and original benevolent cause of all things, as Redeemer of mankind by his Son, and their Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit.’ p. 23.

How far he was influenced by mercenary considerations in retaining his station under such circumstances, it is impossible to say; but that he was guilty of much collusion and impious prevarication in this affair, cannot be reasonably doubted; nor is there any species of simulation or dissimulation in religion, which might not be justified on pretences equally plausible; and when we recollect that Mr. L. persisted in that conduct for a series of years, we shall find it difficult to conceive of him, as that prodigy of virtue, which Mr. Belsham represents him. ‘He must be a severe moralist,’ says Mr. B. ‘whom such a concession does not satisfy.’ And what is this concession, that is to stop every month, and to convert censure into praise? We will give it in Mr. L.’s own words; it is this:

‘Not,’ says he, ‘that I now justify myself therein. Yea, rather I condemn myself. But as I have humble hope of the divine forgiveness, let not men be too rigid in their censures.’ p. 24.

It is impossible to conceive a confession of conduct extremely criminal, in terms of lighter reprehension, but agreeably to the

theory of Mr. B. the merit of repentance so much exceeds the moral turpitude of transgression, that the faintest indications of it transport him with admiration. For our parts, were we not aware of the tendency of Socinianism to produce a most attenuated conception of the evil of sin, we should have expected to find such insincerity and impiety deplored in the strongest language of penitential sorrow. As we wish, however, to do ample justice to the real virtues of Mr. L. we feel a pleasure in quoting the following account of the manner in which he conducted himself while he was rector of Catterick.

‘No sooner was he settled,’ says his biographer, ‘in his new situation, than he applied himself with great assiduity, in his extensive and populous parish, to perform the duties of a parochial minister. He regularly officiated twice on the Sunday in his parish church, and in the interval between the services he catechised young people. He visited the sick, he relieved the poor, he established and supported charity-schools for the children, he spent considerable sums of money in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in providing medicines for the diseased, and in purchasing and distributing the books for the instruction of the ignorant. In his domestic arrangements, the greatest economy was observed, that he and his excellent lady might have the greater surplus to expend in liberality and charity; for it was a rule with him to lay up nothing from the income of his living.’ p. 26.

This is, unquestionably, a pleasing picture of the character of an exemplary Christian pastor. It does not appear that any considerable success attended his labours. On this head he contents himself with expressing a faint hope, that some of the seed he had sowed, might not be lost.

In this situation he continued ten years, till a dangerous fit of sickness roused his conscience, and rendered his continuance in the discharge of his ecclesiastical functions insupportable. We are far from wishing to depreciate the value of that sacrifice which Mr. Lindsey tardily and reluctantly made to the claims of conscience; but we cannot conceal our surprise, that a measure to which he was forced, in order to quell the apprehensions he most justly entertained of the displeasure of the Almighty, after a system of prevarication persisted in for upwards of ten years, should be extolled in terms, which can only be applied with propriety to instances of heroic virtue. To prefer the surrender of certain worldly advantages to a perseverance in conduct highly criminal, evinces a mind not utterly insensible to the force of moral obligation, and nothing more. Our admiration must be reserved for a higher species of excellence;—for an adherence to the side of

delicacy and honor, where many plausibilities might be urged to the contrary ; or a resolute pursuit of the path of virtue, when it is obstructed by the last extremities of evil. Mr. Lindsey renounced, it is true, a respectable and lucrative situation in the church, rather than continue any longer in the practice of what he considered as idolatry. But he was unincumbered with a family ; he possessed some personal property, and enjoyed the friendship of several great and noble personages, who were never likely to suffer him to sink into absolute poverty. He merely descended to the level where many of the best, and some of the greatest of men, have chosen to place themselves, and where his friend Dr. Priestley, whose talents would have commanded any preferment in the church, chose, from an attachment of the same principles, to remain for life. We approve his resignation of his living, but we confess we are more disposed to wonder that he could reconcile himself to continue in his situation so long, than that he should feel himself compelled to quit it at last.

This event took place in the year 1773 ; after which he came to London, and a plan was soon set on foot for opening a chapel for him in the metropolis, where, retaining the use of a liturgy modified agreeably to his views, he might promulgate the tenets of Socinus. Many persons, Mr. B. informs us, both of the establishment and among the dissenters, aided the undertaking, among whom are particularly enumerated the following : Dr. Priestley, and Dr. Price, Samuel Shore, Esq. of Norton Hall, in Yorkshire, and Robert Newton, Esq. of Norton House, in the same village.

These gentlemen, in conjunction with others, entered into a subscription, to indemnify him for the necessary expenses incurred in procuring and fitting up his chapel. The place fixed upon for this grand experiment, was a room in Essex House, Essex Street, which having before been used as an auction-room, was capable, at a moderate expense, of being turned into a convenient place of worship. Here Mr. L. introduced his improved liturgy, formed very much upon the plan of Dr. Clarke's, but with such variations as corresponded to the difference of his views from those of that celebrated divine. From this period, the life of Mr. L. proceeds in a very equable and uniform course, with little worthy of remark, besides the various publications to which the system he had adopted gave birth ; and over the congregation formed in Essex Street, he continued to preside till his 70th year, when he thought fit to retire from a public station ; after which he lived sixteen years, when he was attacked with a disease which was judged to be a pressure of the brain, and expired in the 86th year of his age. Such are the outlines of a narrative which Mr. Belsham has contrived to extend to upwards of five hundred oc-

tavo pages. It is by no means our intention to follow the biographer through his boundless excursions, or to criticise every remark which appears to us justly obnoxious to censure. We shall content ourselves with selecting a few passages, and making a few observations, which may serve to illustrate the genius and progress of Socinianism, the promotion of which evidently appears to be the sole object of the writer of these Memoirs.

The secession of Mr. Lindsey from the established church produced much less impression than might have been expected; nor does it appear that his example was followed by one individual among the clergy, until Mr. Disney, his brother-in-law, after the lapse of some years, adopted the same measure, and afterwards became his colleague in the ministry. The establishment of a Socinian chapel with a reformed liturgy in the metropolis, is narrated by our biographer with the utmost pomp, as forming a distinguished epoch in the annals of religion; and undoubtedly great hopes were entertained of its producing a memorable revolution among the Episcopalians, but these expectations were frustrated. The attendance, composed chiefly of persons of opulence, (among whom the Duke of Grafton made the principal figure,) was at no time very numerous, and no similar society was formed from among the members of the established church in any part of the United Kingdom. The utmost that the efforts of Lindsey, Priestley, and others, effected, was to convert the teachers of Arianism among the dissenters, into Socinians, who exerted themselves with tolerable success to disseminate their principles in their respective congregations; so that the boasted triumphs of Socinianism consisted in sinking that section of the dissenting body, who had already departed from the faith, a few degrees lower in the gulf of error. From these very Memoirs under consideration, we derive the most convincing evidence that the tenets of Socinus, with respect to the nation at large, have lost ground, and that the people of England are much less favorably disposed to them than formerly. They also present us a very full and particular account of the association of a part of the clergy at the Feathers Tavern, to procure relief in the matter of subscription; for which purpose, agreeably to a resolution of the general body, on the 6th of February, 1772, a petition was presented to the house of commons. The number of the petitioners amounted to nearly two hundred and fifty, among whom, the names of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, and Law, Bishop of Carlisle, were the most distinguished. Of the state of the public mind in the metropolis, we have a striking picture in a letter from John Lee, afterwards solicitor-general, a zealous friend of the discontented clergy. 'It will surprise you who live in the country, (says he,) and conse-

quently have not been informed of the discoveries of the metropolis, that the Christian religion is not thought to be an object worthy of the least regard ; and that it is not only the most prudent, but the most virtuous, and benevolent thing in the world, to divert men's minds from such frivolous subjects with all the dexterity that can be. This is no exaggeration, I assure you ; on the contrary, it seems to be the opinion (and their conduct will show it) of nine-tenths of both houses of parliament !' Allowing for some slight exaggerations arising from the chagrin and vexation of the writer, it is still impossible not to perceive, if any credit is due to his statement, that the parliament were not in a disposition to feel any conscientious objections to the repeal of the articles, and that if they opposed such a measure, that opposition originated simply from the fear of innovation common to politicians. The manner in which the debate was conducted when the affair came actually under the consideration of the house, confirms the conclusion.

There was not one member who expressed his belief in the articles : it was treated entirely as a political question, without once advertg to its intrinsic merits, as involving a religious controversy, and Mr. Hans Stanley opposed the bringing up of the petition, as it tended to disturb the peace of the country, which, in his opinion, ought to be the subject of a fortieth article, which would be well worth all the thirty-nine.* With such levity and contempt was the national creed treated at that time. Will the sturdiest champion of Socinianism affirm that a similar discussion in the house of commons, or in the upper house, would be conducted in a similar manner at present ? or that there would not be one member who would contend for the continuance of the articles on the ground of their intrinsic excellence and verity ? The fact is, that through the secularity and irreligion of the clergy, evangelical truth was nearly effaced from the minds of the members of the establishment in the higher ranks, and that an indolent acquiescence in established formularies, had succeeded to the ardor with which the great principles of religion were embraced at the Reformation. Such was the state of the public mind, that in a contest between orthodoxy and heresy, the former proved triumphant, merely because it was already established, and had the plea of antiquity and prescription in its favor. Since that period, vital religion has revived in the national church, the flame of controversy has been widely spread ; the inconsistency of Socinianism with the Scriptures, together with its genuine tendency and character, has been fully developed ; it has lost the attraction of novelty ; it

* See pages 54, 55, of these memoirs.

has revolted the minds of men by its impiety ; and having been weighed in the balance, has been found wanting. If among the clergy there still subsist a small remnant who are attached to those unscriptural tenets, they are content with being connived at, and nothing could now urge them to the imprudence of presenting their claims for legal security to the legislature. We hear nothing of an intention to renew the scenes which took place at the Feathers Tavern in 1772.

We consider this as a decisive proof that Socinianism has lost ground in the nation, notwithstanding its prevalence in societies of a certain description among the dissenters ; those who never formally renounced the orthodox doctrine, have, in consequence of recent discussions, become more than ever attached to it ; while that class of dissenters who were already moving in an heretical direction, have reposed in Socinianism, as their natural centre of gravity. From several other circumstances recorded in these Memoirs, the same inference may be drawn with respect to the discredit under which this system lies at present, compared with the countenance and indulgence with which it was received thirty or forty years back. While Mr. Lindsey was deliberating on the propriety of quitting his living, it was suggested to him by Dr. Priestley, that he might continue to officiate, by making such alterations in the public offices of devotion as corresponded to his peculiar views. ‘ Nor was there any ground to suspect,’ says Mr. B. ‘ that he would have met with any molestation from his superiors.’ Mr. Chambers, who held the living of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, Mr. Disney, for many years, and others, did so without being called to account for their conduct. We should be sorry to express ourselves with an improper degree of confidence, but we may venture to express a firm persuasion, that such a silent repeal of the doctrine of the church by the mere authority of a parochial minister, would not now be permitted to pass unnoticed, or uncensured, in any part of the kingdom. The dignitaries of the church are alive to the importance of the distinguishing truths of Christianity, and would shew themselves prompt and eager, as appears from recent instances, to discourage the open disavowal of them. We have no hesitation in asserting that the hope of rendering the tenets of the Polish heresiarch, popular and prevalent throughout this nation, was at no period so completely extinguished as at the present ; and from a certain air of despondency which the memorialist of Lindsey betrays, amidst all his gasconades, we are convinced he is of the same opinion. The disposition on all occasions to vaunt of their success, and to predict with great confidence the speedy triumph of their principles, is a peculiar feature in the character of modern Socinians, and

the absurd and exaggerated statements of matters of fact into which this propensity betrays them, are truly ludicrous. All other sorts of enthusiasts of whom we have either heard or read, are, in this respect, cold and phlegmatic compared with them. In numerous extracts from the letters of Mr. Lindsey's correspondents, and of others, representations are made of numerous and rapid conversions to Socinianism, which Mr. B., from a regard to truth and decency, finds it necessary to correct and apologize for, as the effusion of well-intended, but intemperate zeal. The boast of success is almost invariably the precursor of a statement on the part of Mr. B. in which it is either repealed, or qualified; and it is but doing him justice to say, that his judgement and experience have exempted him from those illusions and deceptions of which his party have become the easy dupes. We had been confidently informed, for instance, that almost all the people of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts, were becoming Socinians, and that the ministers, with the exception of one or two, had already declared themselves; when it appears from the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Wells, himself a Socinian, and an inhabitant of that city, that there is but one professedly Unitarian chapel throughout New England, and so little sanguine is he with respect to the spread of that doctrine, that he strongly deprecates its discussion, from a conviction that it will issue in producing among the body of the people a more confirmed attachment to orthodoxy.* It is also worthy of remark, that these extravagant boasts of success are not accompanied with the slightest advertence to the moral or spiritual effects, which the Socinian doctrine produces on the character; this is a consideration, which rarely, if ever, enters into the mind of its most zealous abettors, who appear to be perfectly satisfied if they can but accomplish a change of sentiment, however inefficacious to all practical purposes. Their converts are merely proselyted to an opinion, without pretending to be converted to God; and if they are not as much injured by the change as the proselytes made by the Pharisees of old, it must be ascribed to causes totally distinct from the superior excellence of the tenets which they have embraced. They have been taught to discard the worship of Christ, and to abjure all dependence upon him as a Saviour—an admirable preparation, it must be confessed, for a devout and holy life. Let the abettors of those doctrines produce, if they can, a single instance of a person, who, in consequence of embracing them, was reclaimed from a vicious to a virtuous life, from a neglect of serious piety to an exemplary discharge of its obligations and duties; and their success, to whatever

* See his Letter in the Appendix of the Memoirs.

er extent it has been realized, would suggest an argument in their favor deserving some attention. But who is ignorant that among the endless fluctuations of fashions and opinions recorded in the annals of religion, the most absurd and pernicious systems have flourished for a while ; and that Arianism, for instance, which these men profess to abhor almost as much as orthodoxy, prevailed to such a degree for years, as to threaten to become the prevalent religion of Christendom.* Socinianism can boast but few converts compared with infidelity ; in England, at least, they have gone hand in hand, and their progress has been simultaneous, derived from the same causes, and productive of the same effects. Shall we therefore affirm that infidelity is to be rejected with less confidence, because it possesses in reality that to which Socinianism only pretends ? When we reflect on the inert and torpid character of Socinianism, it is surprising any serious expectation should be entertained of its final triumph. From innumerable passages in these Memoirs, it appears that the far greater part of those who have embraced it in the established church, have been content to retain their situation ; and it is certain that of the two hundred and fifty who joined in the petition for relief in the matter of subscription, Mr. Lindsey was the only person who made any sacrifice of emolument to principle. We find both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Belsham incessantly reproaching Unitarians with timidity, in declining the avowal of their sentiments ; and the former remarking with just indignation, that amidst the multitudes that concurred in his views, there was but one member of the established church that afforded him any pecuniary aid towards defraying the necessary expenses attendant on the opening of his chapel. The avowal of Socinianism among dissenters, has rarely been followed by worldly privations ; and in the church of England, where such consequences must have ensued, it has not been made. Except in the instances of Lindsey, Jebb, and a very few others, the converts to Socinianism have stooped to the meanest prevarication, and the most sacrilegious hypocrisy, rather than sacrifice their worldly emoluments and honors. Compare this with the conduct of the Puritans in the reign of Charles the Second ; who, though the points at issue were comparatively trifling and insignificant, chose, to the number of two thousand, to encounter every species of obloquy rather than do violence to their conscience ; and learn the difference between the heroism inspired by Christian principle, and the base and pusillanimous spirit of heresy. What an infatuation to expect that a system, which inspires its votaries with no better sentiments and feelings than are evinced by these decisive

* See the 2d Book of Sulpicius Severus, Chapter 35. "*Tum hæresis Arrii prorupit totumque orbem invecto errore turbaverat.*"

facts, will ever become the prevailing belief; a system which, while it militates against every page of Revelation, is betrayed by the selfish timidity of its followers! The system of Socinus is a cold negation; the whole secret of it consists in thinking meanly of Christ; and what tendency such a mode of thinking can have to inspire elevation or ardor, it is not easy to comprehend. If it is calculated to relieve the conscience of a weight which the principles of orthodoxy render it difficult to shake off without complying with the conditions of the gospel, infidelity answers the same purpose still better, and possesses a still higher degree of simplicity,—meaning by that term what Socinians generally mean, the total absence of mystery.

Great part of these Memoirs are occupied in giving a copious analysis of Mr. L.'s publications, which, possessing no intrinsic merit, nor having excited more than a temporary interest, it would be trifling with the patience of our readers to suppose they could derive either entertainment or instruction from seeing them abridged. Of Mr. Lindsey, considered as a writer, it is sufficient to observe, that the measure of intellect he displays, is the most ordinary, and that he was not possessed of the power, in its lowest degree, of either inventing what was rare, or embellishing what was common. He was perspicuous, because he contented himself, on all occasions, with the most common-place thoughts; he was simple, because he aspired to nothing more than to convey his meaning in intelligible terms, without the least conception of force, elegance, or harmony. Though his writings are replete with professions of unbounded liberality and candor, it is evident, from his treatment of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, that he was indulgent only towards those who approached nearer to infidelity than himself. Nothing can be conceived more splenetic and acrimonious than his examination of that ingenious author's 'Plea for the Divinity of Christ,' who, in return for compliments and condescensions, which, however unworthy of the cause he was defending, were sufficient to soften a Cerberus, met with nothing but rudeness and insolence. It was truly amusing to see the imbecility of a Lindsey assuming the airs of a Warburton. Throughout the whole of that publication, he affects to consider Mr. Robinson as a mere superficial declaimer; although his friend Archdeacon Blackburne, Mr. B. informs us, always spoke of the Plea as a most able and unanswerable performance; so much for the modesty of this heretical confessor!

But it is time to leave Mr. L. to that oblivion which is the infallible destiny of him and of his works, and to proceed to make a few remarks on the narrative, and the miscellaneous strictures of his biographer. In the first place, we congratulate him on his

abatement of that tone of arrogance which so strikingly characterized his former publications ; not that we ever expect him to exhibit himself in the light of an amiable or unassuming writer, which would be for the *Æthiopian* to change his skin ; but it is with pleasure we remark less insolence and dogmatism than he has displayed on other occasions. He writes like a person who is conscious he is supporting a sinking cause ; an air of despondency may be detected amidst his efforts to appear gay and cheerful. He knows perfectly well that he is celebrating the obsequies, not the triumph, of Socinianism ; and from the little advantage it has derived from his former efforts, his vanity will not prevent him from suspecting that he is giving dust to dust, and ashes to ashes.

In this, as in all his former publications, he evinces a total ignorance of human nature, together with that propensity to overrate the practical effect of metaphysical theories, which almost invariably attaches to metaphysicians of an inferior order. He who invents a metaphysical system, which possesses the least claims to public regard, must have paid a profound attention to the actual constitution of human nature. He must have explored the most delicate and intricate processes of the mind, and kept a vigilant eye on the various phenomena which it presents. He is necessarily *above* his theory ; having been conducted to it by an independent effort of thought. He has not adjusted his observations to his hypothesis, but his hypothesis to his observations. The humble disciple, the implicit admirer, proceeds too often in a directly opposite manner. All he knows of the mental constitution, in its more intricate movements, he derives from the system prepared to his hand, which he adopts with all its crudities, and confidently employs as the key which is to unlock all the recesses of nature. Having been accustomed to contemplate the human mind with a constant view to the technical arrangements to which he has devoted himself, he estimates the practical importance of metaphysical theories by what has passed in his own mind. We are fully convinced that the bulk of mankind are very little influenced by metaphysical theories, and that even in minds which are more prone to speculation, metaphysical dogmas are seldom so firmly embraced, or so deeply realized, as to be productive of important practical effects. The advocate of necessity and the champion of liberty, will in the same state of moral proficiency, act precisely the same part in similar circumstances. Mr. Belsham, however, in the plenitude of his enthusiasm for the doctrine of philosophical necessity, ascribes, without hesitation, the ruin of multitudes of young persons to their embracing the opposite tenet. It is truly surprising that he who was so quick-sighted as to perceive the tendency of the notion of liberty to promote

immoral conduct, should entertain no suspicion of a similar tendency in the doctrine of God's being the author of sin, which Mr. B. repeatedly asserts.

'The true solution of the first difficulty (says Mr. B.) whether God be the author of sin? appears to be this: that God is, strictly speaking, the author of evil; but that in the first place, he never ordains or permits evil but with a view to the production of a greater good, which could not have existed without it. And secondly, that though God is the author of evil, both natural and moral, he is not the approver of evil; he does not delight in it for its own sake; it must be the object of his aversion, and what he would never permit or endure, if the good he intends could have been accomplished without it. With respect to the justice of punishment, the best and only philosophical solution of it, is, that under the divine government all punishment is remedial. Moral evil is the disease, punishment is the process of cure, of greater or less intensity, and of longer or shorter duration, in proportion to the malignity and inveteracy of the malady, but ultimately of sovereign efficacy under the divine government, to operate a perfect cure; so that those whose vices have been the means of proving, purifying, and exalting the virtues of others, shall, in the end, share with them in their virtue and their triumph, and *the impartial justice*, and infinite benevolence of the Divine Being, will be made known, adored, and celebrated through the whole created universe.' pp. 323—4.

The malignant tendency of such representations as the foregoing, is so obvious, that it is quite unnecessary to point it out to our readers. How vain are all precautions against sin, if in all cases it is produced by the omnipotent power of the Deity! and what motive can remain for avoiding it, if it is certain of being ultimately crowned with happiness and glory! The distinction between producing it, and approving of it for its own sake, with which the doctrine is attempted to be palliated, is perfectly futile; for this is ascribing no more to the Deity than must in justice be ascribed to the most profligate of mankind, who never commit sin for its own sake, but purely with a view to certain advantages with which it is connected; and the difference between the two cases arises, not from any distinction in the moral character of the proceeding, but simply from the superior comprehension of view, with which the conduct of the Deity is accompanied. As the perpetration of vice is, upon this system, a calamity, not a crime, it is but fitting and necessary it should receive a compensation; and for this Mr. B. has provided, by representing the ultimate happiness of such as have been the means of purifying the virtue of others by their vices, as the effect of the impartial justice of the Deity. Persons of this description are, it seems, a species of benefactors,

and it is but right they should, in due time, be rewarded. They are the scavengers of the universe, and having done a great deal of necessary, though dirty work, they are entitled to commiseration at present, and to proportionable compensation in another state of being. How admirably are these views adapted to promote a horror of sin! What tenderness of conscience, fear of offending, deep humility, and penitence, may we expect to find in Mr. Belsham, and in his admirers! Doubtless their eyes are a fountain of tears, which, like Jeremiah, they are incessantly pouring out for those vices and impieties, which are the sure and certain pledges of endless felicity.

To expect Mr. B. to write a bulky volume without intermingling a large portion of infidelity, would be to expect grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. In the work under consideration, he fully maintains the consistency of his character. He more than insinuates his disbelief of a great, if not the greater part, of the Mosaic history. Mr. Lindsey having expressed himself in terms of just reprehension with respect to the conduct of those who reject the books of Moses, Mr. B. takes upon him to censure the severity of his friend.

‘But surely if the venerable writer (says he,) had reconsidered the case with his usual calmness and impartiality, he would have seen that a person may be a very firm believer in the divine mission and doctrine of Christ, and be well satisfied with the general evidence of the divine legation of Moses, while he at the same time may entertain very serious doubts, whether the books commonly attributed to Moses were really written throughout by him, and whether either the narrative or the institute, exist at present exactly in the form in which he delivered them.’ P. 408.

But supposing the narrative to be in certain points false, the institution misrepresented and disguised, and the books which we term the Pentateuch the production of some author, who does not see the impossibility of separating the truth from the falsehood, and of attaching, on any consistent principles, to any part of it, the credit due to a divine communication?—The spirit of infidelity evinced in these passages, is little different from that which pervades the pages of Bolingbroke and Voltaire. But such is the genuine progress of Socinianism: it begins with denying some of the clearest propositions in the New Testament, in order to which its claims to inspiration must be weakened or annulled; whence it proceeds to dispute the authority of the Old, till the whole Bible be virtually set aside as the umpire of controversy. Among the other sublime discoveries to which Mr. B. has been led by a critical investigation of the writings of the New Testament, one is,

that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses no authority whatever, or, to use a term of his own invention, no *external* authority. Speaking of the Duke of Grafton, he says,

‘In a paper, dated Jan. 1, 1792, the Duke expresses a belief that the exaltation of Christ to dominion and authority was the consequence of his submission to those sufferings which “were so efficacious, perhaps so necessary, to his own glory and to the future happiness of mankind.” His mind at this time seems to have been perplexed with some obscure notion of the unscriptural doctrines of meritorious sufferings, and of the external authority of Jesus Christ ; which, however, he regards as a mystery, which “it will probably never be given to man in the present state” to understand, and which, therefore, “must consequently be ranked among those articles, the belief of which cannot be necessary to salvation.”’ P. 327.

Though the Apostles have affirmed the exaltation of the Saviour to the government of the universe, in every variety of form which language can supply ; though he himself declared that all power was given to him in heaven and in earth, his possession of external authority is unblushingly asserted to be an unscriptural tenet. We challenge Mr. B. to invent terms more strongly expressive of the highest dominion and authority, than those which the inspired writers have employed in describing the exaltation of the Saviour. We can regard this assertion of Mr. Belsham’s, in no other light than as a specimen of that theological audacity which forms the principal feature in that gentleman’s character, and which happily can have no other effect than to inspire a complete abhorrence of the system which renders such a procedure necessary. We cheerfully accept, however, the concession implied in these daring positions, that the doctrine of the meritorious sufferings of Christ is inseparably connected with his exaltation ; and as the latter cannot, without the utmost indecency, be denied, the former follows of course. We can annex no other meaning to the epithet external, as applied to *authority*, than what might be more clearly expressed by the term personal ; or, in other words, Mr. B’s intention is to assert, that our Lord possesses no authority whatever, apart from the credit due to his mission and to his doctrine, and that the Christian church is in no other sense governed by Christ, than the Jews might be affirmed to be governed by Moses after his decease. It must be obvious, however, to every one, that this is not to explain, but boldly and unequivocally to contradict, the writings of the Apostles on this important subject.

We shall close these strictures on Mr. Belsham, by quoting one passage more, which illustrates at once his insufferable arrogance, and his servile deference to authority.

‘What childish simplicity and ignorance,’ says he, ‘does it betray in some, to feign or to feel alarmed at the tendency of those doctrines which are avowed by such men as Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb, and which are represented by them as lying at the foundation of all right views of the divine government, of all rational piety and virtuous practice, and of all rational and substantial consolation! And yet such persons feel no alarm at the vulgar notion of philosophical liberty, or the power of acting differently in circumstances precisely similar; a notion, the fond persuasion of which encourages men to venture into circumstances of moral danger, and to which thousands of the young and inexperienced especially are daily falling victims.’ P. 394.

The arrogance, folly, and absurdity of this passage are scarcely to be paralleled, even in the writings of its inimitable author. The most celebrated metaphysicians and reasoners, in every age and in every country, Malebranche, Cudworth, Clarke, Butler, Reid, Chillingworth, and innumerable others, who have avowed the strongest apprehensions of the immoral tendency of the doctrine of fatalism, or, as it has been styled, of philosophical necessity, are consigned by a writer, who has not capacity sufficient to appreciate their powers, much less to rival their productions, to the reproach of childish simplicity and ignorance; and this for no other reason than their presuming to differ in opinion from Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb! What is this but to enjoin implicit faith? and why might not a Roman Catholic, with equal propriety, accuse of childish simplicity and ignorance, those who should suspect the pernicious tendency of sentiments held by Pascal, Fénélon, and Bossuet? We must be permitted to remind Mr. B. that we hold his pretensions to a liberal and independent turn of thought extremely cheap; that possessing nothing original even in his opinions, to say nothing of his genius, his most vigorous efforts have terminated in his becoming a mere train-bearer, in a very insignificant procession.

Having already detained our readers longer on this article than we ought, we should now put a period to our remarks, but that there is one particular connected with the history of Mr. Lindsey, which, we conceive, has been too often set in such a light, as is calculated to produce erroneous impressions. We refer to the resignation of his livings, in deference to his religious scruples. He is, on this account, every where designated by Mr. Belsham by the title of ‘the venerable Confessor;’ and, what is more to be wondered at, the late excellent Job Orton, in a letter to his friend, the late Rev. Mr. Palmer, of Hackney, speaks of him in the following terms:

‘Were I to publish an account of silenced and ejected ministers, I should be strongly tempted to insert Mr. Lindsey in the list, which

he mentions in his Apology with so much veneration. He certainly deserves as much respect and honor as any of them, for the part he has acted. Perhaps few of them exceeded him in learning and piety. I venerate him as I would any of your confessors. As to his particular sentiments, they are nothing to me. An honest pious man, who makes such a sacrifice to truth and conscience as he has done, is a glorious character, and deserves the respect, esteem, and veneration of every true Christian.'

We have no scruple in asserting that this unqualified encomium is repugnant to reason, to Scripture, and to the sentiments of the best and purest ages of the Christian church. To pass over the absurdity of denominating Mr. L. a silenced and ejected minister, merely on account of his voluntary withdrawal from a community whose distinguishing tenets he had abandoned, we are far from conceiving that the merit attached to his conduct on this occasion, was of such an order as to entitle him for a moment to rank with confessors and martyrs. To the praise of manly integrity for quitting a situation he could no longer conscientiously retain, we are ready to acknowledge Mr. L. fully entitled. We are cordially disposed to admire integrity, wherever we perceive it; and we admire it the more in the present instance, because such examples of it, among beneficed ecclesiastics, have been rare. But we cannot permit ourselves to place sacrifices to error on the same footing as sacrifices to truth, without annihilating their distinction. If revealed truth possess any thing of sanctity and importance, the profession of it must be more meritorious than the profession of its opposite; and, by consequence, sacrifices made to that profession must be more estimable. He who suffers in the cause of truth is entitled to admiration; he who suffers in the defence of error and delusion, to our commiseration; which are unquestionably very different sentiments. If truth is calculated to elevate and sanctify the character, he who cheerfully sacrifices his worldly emolument to its pursuit, must be supposed to have participated, in no common degree, of its salutary operation. He who suffers equal privations in the propagation of error, evinces, it is confessed, his possession of moral honesty; but unless persuasion could convert error into truth, it is impossible it should impart to error the effects of truth. Previous to the profession of any tenets whatever, there lies an obligation on all to whom the light of the gospel extends, to believe the truth. We are bound to confess Christ before men, only because we are bound to believe on him. But if, instead of believing on him, we deny him in his essential characters, which is the case with Socinians, the sincerity of that denial will indeed rescue us from the guilt of prevarication, but not from that of unbelief. It is possible, at least, since some sort

of faith in Christ is positively asserted to be essential to salvation, that the tenets of the Socinians may be such as to exclude that faith : that it does exclude it, no orthodox man can consistently deny ; and how absurd it were to suppose a man should be entitled to the reward of a Christian confessor, merely for denying, *bona fide*, the doctrine which is essential to salvation ! The sincerity which accompanies his profession, entitles him to the reward of a confessor ; the error of the doctrine which he professes exposes him, at the same time, to the sentence of condemnation as an unbeliever ! If we lose sight of Socinianism for a moment, and suppose an unbeliever in Christianity *in toto*, to suffer for the voluntary and sincere promulgation of his tenets, we would ask Mr. Orton, in what rank he would be inclined to place his infidel confessor ? Is *he* entitled to rank with *any* of the confessors ? If he is, our Saviour's terms of salvation are essentially altered, and though he pronounces an anathema on him who shall deny him before men, the sturdy and unshaken denial of him in the face of worldly discouragement, would answer, it seems, as well as a similar confession. Men are left at their liberty in this respect, and they are equally secure of eternal happiness, whether they deny, or whether they confess the Saviour, providing they do it firmly and sincerely. If these consequences appear shocking, and he be forced to assert the negative, then it is admitted that the truth of the doctrine confessed, enters essentially into the inquiry, whether he who suffers for his opinions, is to be, *ipso facto*, classed with Christian confessors. Let it be remembered, that we are not denying that he who hazards his worldly interest, rather than conceal or dissemble his tenets, how false or dangerous soever they may be, is an honest man, and, *quoad hoc*, acts a virtuous part ; but that he is entitled to the same kind of approbation with the champion of truth. That the view we have taken of the subject is consonant to the Scriptures, will not be doubted by those who recollect that St. John rests his attachment to Gaius and to the elect lady, on the truth which dwelt in them ; that he professed no Christian attachment, but for the truth's sake ; and that he forbade Christians to exercise hospitality, or to shew the least indication of friendship, to those who taught any other doctrine than that which he and his fellow Apostles had taught. The source of the confusion and absurdity which necessarily attach to the opinions of Mr. Orton and others, here expressed on this subject, consists in their confounding together moral sincerity and Christian piety. We are perfectly willing to admit, that the latter cannot subsist without the former ; but we are equally certain that the former is by no means so comprehensive as necessarily to include the latter. We should have imagined it unnecessary to enter into an

elaborate defence of so plain a position as this, that it is one thing to be what the world styles an honest man, and another to be a Christian; a distinction, obvious as it is, sufficient to solve the whole mystery, and to account for the conduct of Mr. L. without adopting the unmeaning jargon of his biographer, who styles him, in innumerable places, the *venerable confessor*. How repugnant the language we have been endeavoring to expose, is to that which was held in the purest and best ages of the church, must be obvious to all who are competently acquainted with ecclesiastical history. The Marcionites, we are informed by Eusebius, boasted of their having furnished a multitude of martyrs, but they were not the less on that account considered as deniers of Christ. Hence, when orthodox Christians happened occasionally to meet at the places of martyrdom with Montanists and Manichæans, they refused to hold the least communion with them, lest they should be supposed to consent to their errors.* In a word, the *nature* of the doctrine professed must be taken into consideration, before we can determine that profession to be a Christian profession; nor is martyrdom entitled to the high veneration justly bestowed on acts of heroic piety, on any other ground than its being, what the term imports, an *attestation of the truth*. It is the saint which makes the martyr, not the martyr the saint.

* Euseb. L. 5. C. 14.

REVIEW
OF
BIRT ON POPERY,

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REVIEW.

A Summary of the Principles and History of Popery, in Five Lectures, on the Pretensions and Abuses of the Church of Rome.
BY JOHN BIRT. 8vo. pp. 176.

AT a time when Popery is making rapid strides, and Protestants in general have lost the zeal which once animated them, we consider the publication we have just announced as peculiarly seasonable. What may be the ultimate effect of the efforts made by the adherents of the Church of Rome to propagate its tenets, aided by the apathy of the opposite party, it is not for us to conjecture. Certain it is, there never was a period when the members of the papal community were so active and enterprising, or Protestants so torpid and indifferent. Innumerable symptoms appear, of a prevailing disposition to contemplate the doctrines of Popery with less disgust, and to witness their progress with less alarm, than has ever been known since the Reformation. All the zeal and activity are on one side; and while every absurdity is retained, and every pretension defended, which formerly drew upon Popery the indignation and abhorrence of all enlightened Christians, we should be ready to conclude, from the altered state of public feeling, that a system once so obnoxious had undergone some momentous revolution. We seem, on this occasion, to have interpreted, in its most literal sense, the injunction of "hoping all things, and believing all things." We persist in maintaining that the adherents to Popery are materially changed, in contradiction to their express disavowal; and while they make a boast of the infallibility of their creed, and the unalterable nature of their religion, we persist in belief of its having experienced we know not what melioration and improvement. In most instances, when men are deceived, it is the effect of art and contrivance on the part of those who delude them: in this, the deception originates with ourselves; and instead of bearing *false* witness against our neighbor, such is the excess of our candor, that we refuse to credit the unfavorable testimony which he bears of himself.

There is, in the mean time, nothing reciprocal in this strange method of proceeding ; we pipe to them, but they will not dance. Our concessions, instead of softening and mollifying, seem to have no other effect upon them, than to elate their pride and augment their arrogance.

An equal change in the state of feeling towards an object which has itself undergone no alteration whatever, and where the party by which it is displayed profess to adhere to their ancient tenets, it would be difficult to specify. To inquire into the causes of this singular phenomenon, would lead to discussion foreign to our present purpose. Let it suffice to remark, that it may partly be ascribed to the length of time which has elapsed since we have had actual experience of the enormous cruelties of the papal system, and to the fancied security we possess against their recurrence ; partly to the agitation of a great political question, which seems to have had the effect of identifying the cause of Popery with that of Protestant Dissenters. The impression of the past has in a manner spent itself ; and in many, its place is occupied by an eagerness to grasp at present advantages, and to lay hold of every expedient for shaking off the restraints which a narrow and timid policy has imposed. The influence of these circumstances has been much aided by that indifference to religious truth which too often shelters itself under the mask of candor ; and to such an extent has this humor been carried, that distinguished leaders in Parliament have not scrupled to represent the controversy between the Papists and the Protestants as turning on obscure and unintelligible points of doctrine, scarcely worth the attention of enlightened minds ; while a beneficed clergyman of some distinction, has treated the whole subject as of no more importance than the idle disputes agitated by the schoolmen. It was but a few years since, that a celebrated nobleman, in the House of Peers, vehemently condemned the oath of abjuration for applying the term *superstitious* to the doctrine of transubstantiation. In exactly the same spirit, the appellation of Papist is exchanged for Catholic,—a concession which the adherents of the Church of Rome well know how to improve, as amounting to little short of a formal surrender of the point at issue. For, if the Papists are really entitled to the name of *Catholics*, Protestants of every denomination are involved in the guilt of schism.

This revolution in the feelings of a great portion of the public, has probably been not a little promoted by another cause. The present times are eminently distinguished by the efforts employed for the extension of vital religion : each denomination of Christians has taken its station, and contributed its part toward the diffusion of evangelical sentiments. The consequence has been, that

the professors of serious piety are multiplied, and form at present a very conspicuous branch of the community. The space which they occupy in the minds of the public, is not merely proportioned to their numerical importance, still less to their rank in society. It is in a great measure derived from the publicity of their proceedings, and the numerous associations for the promotion of pious and benevolent objects, which they have originated and supported. By these means, their discriminating doctrines, essential to vital piety, have become better known, and more fully discussed than heretofore. However beneficial, as to its general effects, such a state of things may have been, one consequence, which might be expected, has been the result. The opposition of the enemies of religion has become so virulent, their hatred more heated and inflamed, and they have turned with no small complacency to the contemplation of a system, which forms a striking contrast to the object of their detestation. Popery, in the ordinary state of its profession, combines the "form of godliness" with a total denial of its power. A heap of unmeaning ceremonies, adapted to fascinate the imagination, and engage the senses,—implicit faith in human authority, combined with an utter neglect of Divine teaching,—ignorance the most profound, joined to dogmatism the most presumptuous,—a vigilant exclusion of biblical knowledge, together with a total extinction of free inquiry,—present the spectacle of religion lying in state, surrounded with the silent pomp of death. The very absurdities of such a religion render it less unacceptable to men whose decided hostility to truth inclines them to view with complacency, whatever obscures its beauty, or impedes its operation. Of all the corruptions of Christianity which have prevailed to any considerable extent, Popery presents the most numerous points of contrast to the simple doctrines of the gospel; and just in proportion as it gains ground, the religion of Christ must decline.

On these accounts, though we are far from supposing that Popery, were it triumphant, would allow toleration to any denomination of Protestants, we have the utmost confidence, that the professors of evangelical piety would be its first victims. The party most opposed to them, look to Papists as their natural ally, on whose assistance, in the suppression of what they are pleased to denominate fanaticism and enthusiasm, they may always depend; they may, therefore, without presumption, promise themselves the distinction conferred on Ulysses, that of being last devoured.

Whether Popery will be permitted, in the inscrutable counsels of Heaven, again to darken and overspread the land, is an inquiry in which it is foreign in our province to engage. It is certain that the members of the Romish community, are at this moment

on the tip-toe of expectation, indulging the most sanguine hopes, suggested by the temper of the times, of soon recovering all that they have lost, and of seeing the pretended rights of their church restored in their full splendor. If any thing can realize such an expectation, it is undoubtedly the torpor and indifference of Protestants, combined with the incredible zeal and activity of Papists; and universal observation shews what these are capable of effecting,—how often they compensate the disadvantages arising from paucity of number, as well as almost every kind of equality.

From a settled persuasion that Popery still is, what it always was, a detestable system of impiety, cruelty, and imposture, fabricated by the father of lies, we feel thankful at witnessing any judicious attempt to expose its enormities, and retard its progress. The Lectures published some years since by Mr. Fletcher, are well adapted for this purpose, and entitle their excellent author to the esteem and gratitude of the public. “*The Protestant*,” a series of periodical papers composed by Mr. McGavin, of Glasgow, contains the fullest delineation of the popish system, and the most powerful confutation of its principles in a popular style, of any work we have seen. Whoever wishes to see Popery drawn to the life in its hideous wickedness and deformity, will find abundant satisfaction in the pages of that writer.

The author before us has been studious of conciseness, and has contented himself with exhibiting a brief, but a very correct and impressive outline of that copious subject. As these lectures were delivered at Manchester, it is probable the author’s attention was more immediately directed to it, by witnessing the alarming progress which the tenets of the Romish Church are making in that quarter. There is nothing in them, however, of a local nature, or which is calculated to limit their usefulness to any particular part of the kingdom. They are adapted for universal perusal, and entitled to an extensive circulation.

The First Lecture is on the claim of the Church of Rome to the appellation of *catholic*, the futility and absurdity of which the author has confuted, in a concise but highly satisfactory manner. On this part of the argument, he very acutely remarks, ‘That no church which is not coeval with Christianity itself, ought to pretend to be the universal Christian Church.

‘The contrary sentiment is evidently unreasonable and absurd; for it supposes, that something which has already a distinct and complete existence, may be a part of something else which is not to come into being until a future period; or, which is equivalent to this, that what is entirely the creation of to-day, may include that which was created yesterday. This would be in opposition to all analogy; and therefore, if the Church of Rome had not an

earlier commencement than all other Christian Churches,—if the origin of that church be not coincident and simultaneous with the first moment of Christianity, then the pretension of the Church of Rome to be the “Catholic Church,” is altogether vain. Now, it is clear, from the Acts of the Apostles, that many Christian churches flourished in the East, before the Gospel was even preached at Rome. It was enjoined on the Apostles that their ministry should begin at Jerusalem, and in that city, the first Christian church was actually constituted. Until the persecution which arose about the stoning of Stephen, Christ was not preached beyond the borders of Palestine, and even then, with a scrupulous discrimination, “to the Jews only.” In fact, churches were formed in Jerusalem and Judea, at Damascus and Antioch, and the gospel was sent even into Ethiopia, before there is any evidence of its being known at Rome.” pp. 10, 11.

The Second Lecture is an historical exposition of the principal events which led to the elevation of the Church of Rome to supremacy ; in tracing these, much acumen is evinced, as well as an intimate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history.

The Third Lecture consists of a masterly delineation of the genius and characteristics of the papal ascendancy. In this part of the work, the judicious author enters deeply into the interior spirit of Popery. After setting in a striking light, the seeming impossibilities it had to encounter ere it could accomplish its object, he enumerates the expedients employed for this purpose, under the following heads. The votaries of the papal see succeeded, 1. By enslaving the mental faculties to human authority.—2. By giving to superstition the semblance and sanction of religion.—3. By administering the affairs of their government on the corruptest principles of worldly policy. Each of these topics is illustrated with great judgement, and a copious induction of facts. On the last of these heads, we beg leave to present to our readers the following extract, as a specimen of the style and spirit of this writer.

“My kingdom is *not* of this world,” saith our Lord ; “My kingdom *is* of this world,” is truly the sentiment of the Pope ; and here lies the difference. The only consistent view of this church, is that of a political establishment, employing indeed religious terms and denominations, but only as the pretext and color of an inordinate pursuit of secular and temporal objects. Read its history as that of a Christian Church, you stumble at every step, and every period shocks you with the grossest incongruities : read the same history as of one of the kingdoms of this world, all is natural and easy, and the various proceedings and events are just what you are prepared to expect. The papal supremacy was conceded by

an earthly monarch—all its interests have varied with the fluctuations of human affairs—and when the princes of this world shall withdraw their support, it will fall, and great will be the fall thereof. The Bishops of Rome have ever pursued, under the guise of religion, some earthly advantage; and thus Pope Leo the Tenth exclaimed most appropriately, “Oh how profitable has this fable of Jesus been unto us!”

‘The first object of these subtle politicians, was to provide a revenue, ample and permanent. Kings and nations were accordingly laid under tribute, and to the utmost extent of papal influence, the treasures of Christendom flowed into the Exchequer of Rome. On every hand, art, fraud, and intimidation, were equally and successfully employed, in transferring the wealth of the world to the coffers of the church.

‘This was effected partly by regular ecclesiastical taxes, but principally by selling every thing the Church of Rome had to bestow, and by perpetually inventing new articles of bargain and sale. Hence the multiplying of sacraments; hence the sale of pardons, indulgences, benefices, dignities, and of prayers for the living and the dead. Every thing was prostituted: and under the pretence of being the “bride, the Lamb’s wife,” this church became the “mother of harlots.” In the same spirit, the death-beds of the rich were besieged, that they might bequeath their property to the clergy; and the consciences of opulent criminals were appeased, in return for liberal donations to ecclesiastical funds. Thus an amount of riches almost incredible accrued to the papal treasury.’ pp. 94—96.

The Fourth Lecture is occupied by giving a rapid sketch of the most interesting events in the past history of the Romish community. We have seldom, if ever, seen so large a body of facts exhibited with perfect perspicuity within so small a compass: The author’s complete mastery of the subject appears from the ease with which he has condensed an immense mass of historical matter, without the least indication of disorder or confusion.

The last of these Lectures presents an animated and instructive view of the prospects which are opening on the Christian Church, and the probable issue of the causes which are in present operation.

The notice we have taken of this publication will, we trust, induce our readers to avail themselves of the instruction and the pleasure which an attentive perusal cannot fail to bestow. It is distinguished for precision and comprehension of thought, energy of diction, and the most enlarged and enlightened principles of civil and religious freedom; nor should we find it easy to name a publication which contains, within the same compass, so much information on the subject which it professes to treat. A little re-

dundance of ornament, and excess in the employment of figurative language, are excrescences very pardonable in a young writer, and which more mature years and experience may be safely left to correct. On the whole, we cannot dismiss the work before us, without sincerely congratulating the author on that happy combination of philosophical discrimination with Christian piety, which it throughout displays.

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